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THE WOMEN BONAPARTES

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

FIVE FAIR SISTERS
A PRINCESS OF INTRIGUE
MADAME RÉCAMIER AND HER FRIENDS
MADAME DE POMPADOUR
MADAME DE MONTESPAN
MADAME DU BARRY
QUEENS OF THE FRENCH STAGE
LATER QUEENS OF THE FRENCH STAGE
QUEEN MARGOT

CAROLINE BONAPARTE, QUEEN OF NAPLES, AND HER ELDER DAUGHTER, PRINCESSE MARIA LŒTITIA JOSÉPHINE MURAT, AFTERWARDS CONTESSA PEPOLI

FROM THE PAINTING BY MADAME LEBRUN AT VERSAILLES

THE WOMEN BONAPARTES

THE MOTHER AND THREE SISTERS OF NAPOLEON I.

BY

H. NOEL WILLIAMS

AUTHOR OF "FIVE FAIR SISTERS," ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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WE left Pauline setting out with her husband on her journey to Italy. After spending a few days in Florence, at Borghese's palace in the Via Ghibellina, and being entertained, by the widowed Queen of Etruria, to a State dinner at the Palazzo Pitti,

on which occasion the comical sight which that ugly, deformed little princess presented in full Court toilette so tickled Pauline that she was quite unable to restrain her merriment, they reached Rome on December 9.

The new princess, as may be supposed, had no reason to complain of the reception which was accorded her, both by the Papal Court and by society. On the day of her arrival, Cardinal Consalvi, the Secretary of State, the Dowager-Princess Borghese, and all her husband's relatives residing in Rome called upon her, and overwhelmed her with compliments and attentions. A few days later, she had an audience of Pius VII, who accorded her the unusual honour of being received in his own apartments, instead of in the gardens of the Vatican, where ladies of high rank were usually presented to him; and Consalvi wrote to the Nuncio in Paris that his Holiness had been pleased with her beyond all conception, and the princess equally so with the Pope, and that the latter had made her a present of "a magnificent chaplet and a superb cameo." The next few days were devoted to receiving, at the Palazzo Borghese, the Roman nobility, the members of the Sacred College, and the Diplomatic Corps, and a round of sumptuous dinners and magnificent fêtes completed the princess's introduction to her new life.

Pauline certainly seems to have made a wonderfully favourable impression upon Roman

society, and Consalvi's despatches to Caprara are full of the most glowing accounts of her physical and moral perfections, the charm which she exercised over every one, from the Holy Father downwards, "the great and edifying familiarity" in which she lived with her mother-in-law and the Borghese, and the tender affection which reigned between her and her husband, all of which was, needless to say, duly brought by the astute Nuncio to the notice of the Emperor, and occasioned him such gratification that, on January 17, 1804, he wrote to accredit his sister officially to the Pope, which, owing to his anger at her *mariage de conscience*, he had hitherto refused to do.

But, unhappily, Napoleon's hopes that his volatile sister would be contented with her new life, and would continue to deserve the encomiums which were lavished upon her, were doomed to disappointment. For a few weeks—that is to say, until the novelty of her surroundings had begun to wear off—Pauline was enchanted with Rome. She was gratified by the universal homage which was paid her, the murmurs of admiration which greeted her whenever she appeared in public, the splendid entertainments which were given in her honour. She was pleased with the sumptuously-furnished apartments set apart for her use in that splendid palace with its cloistered courtyard and its Renaissance garden; and, although she knew

little, and cared less, about art, she must have felt a thrill of pride when she first entered that far-famed gallery, filled with the masterpieces of Raphael and Titian, of Correggio and Botticelli, of Domenichino and Bernini, of Lorenzo di Credi and Leonardo da Vinci, which strangers came from all parts of Europe to admire, and reflected that her husband was the master of all these treasures. She was pleased, too, with the Villa Borghese, although the impressions its beauties made upon her were probably very different from those experienced by Madame de Stael;[1] and she is said to have remarked on being introduced to Agasias's *Gladiator*, now in the Louvre, that it would look all the better for a good scrubbing.

But it was not in Pauline's nature to be satisfied with anything long, and soon she began to feel profoundly bored, and to indulge in comparisons between Rome and Paris, very much to the disadvantage of the Eternal City. Rome was beautiful no doubt, but oh! so *triste;* ruin and decay seemed to be in the very air. She met persons who declared that they loved it, and that they could be happy nowhere else. *Eh bien!* They were welcome to it. But, for herself, she preferred Paris; yes, a thousand times; there one lived, here one vegetated. And the people—these

[1] "Ovide et Vergile pourraient se promener dans ce beau lieu, et se croire encore au siècle de Auguste. . . . Tout est là pour la pensée, pour l'imagination, pour la rêverie."—CORINNE.

cardinals, diplomats, and nobles. *Mon Dieu!* how dull they were, how pompous, how self-opinionated! If she had to spend much of her time among them, she would assuredly die of ennui!

The truth was that Pauline was far from happy in her married life. She did not love her husband; she did not even respect him, as she certainly had "her little Leclerc." She had been dazzled, for a time, by the glamour of his rank and his wealth; but when that had passed away, whether it was that his Highness was not sufficiently generous, or not sufficiently devoted, or not sufficiently complaisant, she decided that he was but a poor creature, wholly unworthy to possess such a priceless treasure as herself, and there were moments when she found it difficult to dissimulate the disdain with which he inspired her.

With her husband's family, and particularly with his mother, matters were even worse. Although, for "reasons of State," the dowager-princess had deemed it prudent to express her warm approval of her son's marriage, and had welcomed Pauline very cordially on her arrival in Rome, she appears to have been, in reality, anything but favourably disposed towards it, nor was the conduct of her daughter-in-law calculated to alter her views. She disapproved of her levity and extravagance; she deeply resented the indifference and the disdain which she dis-

played towards her husband, and she was shocked, as, indeed, were many other worthy matrons, at her disregard of the conventions, of that outward appearance of gravity and decorum, which respect for the papal hierarchy imposed upon Roman society, and which even its most frivolous members did not venture to ignore. By the beginning of the spring, the relations between Pauline and her husband's family had become so strained, that Joseph Fesch, after vainly remonstrating with his niece, was obliged to appeal to Napoleon, who lost no time in admonishing the culprit.

Germinal 16, Year XII

(*April* 6, 1804)

Madame and dear sister,—I am informed that you have not the good sense to conform to the manners and customs of the city of Rome, that you show contempt for the inhabitants, and that your eyes are continually turned towards Paris. Although occupied with important affairs, I have, nevertheless, decided to make known to you my intentions, in the hope that you will conform to them.

Love your husband and his family; be considerate. Accommodate yourself to the customs of the city of Rome, and be very sure that if, at your age, you permit yourself to be guided by evil counsels, you can no longer count on me.

As for Paris, you may be sure that you will find no support there, and that I shall never receive you, except in the company of your

husband. If you quarrel with him, the fault will be yours, and, then, France will be interdicted to you. You will lose your happiness and my affection.

And, by the same courier, the First Consul despatched the following instructions to Fesch:

M. le Cardinal Fesch,—I send you a letter for Madame Paulette. I do not attach credence to more than half of what you say in your letter; nevertheless, it is distressing for me to think that Madame Borghese does not understand how important it is for her happiness to accustom herself to the manners of Rome, and to procure, from the esteem of that great city, a recompense which ought to be sweet to a heart as naturally good as hers. At the same time, I acquaint you with my intentions, in a manner both very simple and very precise; I trust that she will conform to them, and, besides, the arrival of her mother will afford her good counsel, by which she will profit. Tell her then, from me, that she is no longer beautiful, that she will be still less so a few years hence, and that for the whole of her life she ought to be good and esteemed. It is right, also, that her husband should take into consideration the life to which she was accustomed in Paris, and that he should allow her the liberty which our women are accustomed to enjoy in this country. She ought to study to please her husband's family and all the grandees of Rome, and to establish a tone in society befitting the rank she occupies, and not those bad manners which good breeding condemns, even in the most frivolous circles in the capital.

In order to minimise the danger of Pauline ignoring his instructions and making a sudden descent on Paris, Napoleon endeavoured to persuade her to sell him her hôtel in the Rue Faubourg Saint-Honoré, which she had acquired in April 1803, and which it was his wish to present to Hortense, who greatly admired it. The princess, however, divined her brother's intentions, and instructed her man of business in Paris to put so extravagant a price upon the property that the negotiations came to nothing.

On the arrival of Madame Bonaparte in Rome, Pauline's conduct became more circumspect; but she did not cease to sigh for the delights of her beloved Paris, and made no attempt to conceal the ennui which possessed her. The proclamation of the Empire, and the news that she had become a princess in her own right, was naturally very gratifying to her vanity, but, at the same time, served but to intensify her longing to return to France. Was it not exasperating that Élisa and Caroline should be enjoying all the gaieties of the Imperial Court, while she, who was far more fitted to shine amid such surroundings than either of them, should be condemned to spend her life entertaining pompous cardinals and dull diplomatists, under the censorious eye of a prudish mother-in-law?

At the beginning of June, she persuaded her husband to take her to Pisa, on the plea that she

PAULINE BONAPARTE, PRINCESS BORGHESE

FROM THE STATUE BY CANOVA IN THE VILLA BORGHESE AT ROME

was ill and wished to try the baths. A few days, however, sufficed to convince her that the baths did not agree with her constitution, and she accordingly betook herself to Florence, where, for the first time, she tasted the pleasure of being received with all the honours due to royalty. After remaining a fortnight at Florence, and bewildering the little Etrurian Court, as much by the splendour and variety of her toilettes as by her beauty, her Imperial Highness proceeded to Bagni di Lucca, where, towards the middle of July, she was joined by her mother.

The baths of Lucca, or, more probably, the many distinguished visitors whom their fame attracted thither, suited Pauline much better than those of Pisa; she appears to have thoroughly enjoyed herself. Every one was charmed by her amiability and condescension, which she carried so far as not only to attend a ball given by the mayor, but even to dance with some of the civic functionaries. However, a month after her arrival at Lucca, sad news arrived from Rome. On August 11, her little son, Dermide Leclerc, now six years of age, who, when his mother left Rome, had been sent to Borghese's villa at Frascati, in charge of his nurses, was attacked by fever and died three days later.

Her first husband's relatives, with whom Pauline was on very bad terms—they had quarrelled over the general's will, and the Leclercs had taken great offence at her insisting upon taking Der-

mide to Italy, instead of entrusting him to their care—accused her openly of having neglected the child and of leaving him to die in the care of servants. There seems, however, to be no foundation for the first charge; and, in regard to the second, even if Pauline had been warned immediately the boy fell ill and had started for Rome without a moment's delay, she could not have arrived in time, whereas she appears to have been ignorant of his illness until the fatal news reached her.

On the other hand, it must be admitted that her subsequent conduct certainly provided the Leclercs with some excuse for the hard things they said about her. Instead of returning to Rome, she remained at Lucca until the end of August, when she removed to a villa belonging to her husband in the outskirts of Florence. Here, instead of living in the retirement which her loss would have seemed to exact, she frequently entertained the Queen of Etruria, and assisted at several fêtes at the Court. She did not even wear mourning, since in Italy it was not then customary to do so for children under the age of seven.

It would, however, be unfair to conclude from this that Pauline had no affection for her child, still less that she was without heart. The probability is that she felt her little son's death acutely at the time, as she had that of his father; but, as we have observed elsewhere, she was incapable

of harbouring any deep sentiment for long, and the more lively her emotions, the shorter was their duration.

Whatever may have been her feelings, however, it is certain that she did not lose sight of the excellent pretext which the sad event afforded her for returning to Paris. She desired that her son should be interred at Montgobert, by the side of his father. Napoleon naturally could not refuse her permission to accompany the funeral *cortège*, and at the beginning of October she set out for France. Nor, when the obsequies had been performed, did she experience any difficulty in obtaining permission to pass some time at the Hôtel Charost, and assist at the approaching Coronation, which had been fixed for Brumaire 18, the anniversary of the *coup d'État* of the Year VII, but was subsequently postponed to December 2.

Madame Bonaparte, as we must still call Letizia, since the title of Imperial Highness had not yet been officially conferred upon her, did not carry out her original intention of returning to France after her visit to Lucca, since the alarming illness of her friend Madame Étienne Clary recalled her to Rome. This lady, who was so devoted to her that she had insisted on sharing her voluntary exile, notwithstanding that she was a very wealthy woman and had a husband and several children to whom she was greatly attached, died soon

after Letizia's return to Rome, to her intense grief. Her death was, indeed, a far greater loss to Madame Bonaparte than she had any conception. Although of humble origin and little education, Madame Clary was a person of sound judgment and quite exceptional tact, and was the only Frenchwoman who exercised any appreciable influence over the Emperor's mother. Letizia had intended to appoint her her *Dame d'honneur*, and had she lived to occupy that post, her counsels would have been of incalculable value to her patroness.

After the death of Madame Clary, however, Madame Bonaparte still delayed her departure for France. Her ostensible reason seems to have been that the Emperor had not yet officially commanded her presence at the Coronation. But her true motive was undoubtedly the hope that, by prolonging her stay in Italy, she might contrive to induce Napoleon to recall Lucien and recognise him as a member of the Imperial Family. At length, on November 14, after having addressed a very urgent appeal to the Emperor, either personally or through the medium of Fesch, she left Rome and travelled as far as Milan, where she was joined by Lucien and his family. Here she remained a week, in anticipation that a courier would arrive with a summons for Lucien to take his place by the side of the throne. But her hopes were doomed to disappointment, and she had to continue her

journey alone, though, as a protest against Napoleon's harshness, she travelled very leisurely and did not arrive in Paris until December 19, more than a fortnight after the Coronation had taken place. Nevertheless, by the Emperor's orders, David included her in his well-known painting of that ceremony, where she is depicted in full Court toilette, blazing with jewels, and wearing a look of ineffable complacency.

The Coronation had not passed off without considerable unpleasantness, due to the rancour of the Bonaparte family against Joséphine. At a council held on November 17, to regulate the ceremonial to be observed on this occasion, there was a violent dispute between the Emperor and Joseph. The latter declared that it was derogatory to the dignity of the princesses that they should be called upon to carry the train of the Empress's ermine mantle, and quoted various precedents in support of his contention. Napoleon, however, insisted on their performing this duty, whereupon Joseph told him that he would prefer to resign his office of Grand Elector and retire to Germany rather than permit his wife to demean herself thus. Finding, however, that his brother was quite ready to take him at his word, and that he must choose between obedience and the loss of his titles and prerogatives, he finally yielded, to the intense chagrin of his sisters, who had done their utmost to incite him to resistance.

Then Caroline engaged Napoleon, and overwhelmed him with entreaties and reproaches. "When dealing with her," exclaimed the disgusted Emperor, "I must always place myself in order of battle. To make a woman of my family understand my intentions, I am compelled to make speeches as long as those I deliver to the Senate or the Council of State."[1] When she found that he remained deaf to all appeals, and that Joseph could not be prevailed upon to return to the charge, Caroline had recourse to her friends in the Council, and to those of the Emperor's old comrades who were privileged to speak to him freely; and almost up to the last moment Napoleon was tormented by the representations of her ambassadors. But all was in vain, and the only concession that could be extorted from him were that the words "to support the mantle" should be used in the *procès-verbal*, instead of "to carry the train."[2] The princesses succeeded, however, in obtaining permission to have their own trains borne by their respective chamberlains; and this distinction somewhat consoled them for the obligation that was imposed upon them.

Since they could not escape it, they determined that it should be fulfilled with the worst possible grace, and that they would do all in their power to make their enemy appear ridicu-

[1] Rœderer, *Mémoires.*
[2] Miot de Mélito, *Mémoires.*

lous.[1] The consequence was that the Empress, whose elegance, dignity, and unaffected bearing delighted all eyes,[2] was so overpowered by the weight of her magnificent mantle, that she could only walk with the greatest difficulty, since her train-bearers would scarcely lift it from the ground; while, at the moment when she was ascending the steps of the throne, they suddenly loosed their hold, in such a way that she was quite unable to advance, and with difficulty saved herself from falling backwards. Happily, Napoleon was on the alert, and a few sharp words from him sufficed to bring his spiteful relatives to reason.[3]

During the weeks which preceded and followed the Coronation, the sisters of the Emperor were much occupied in the formation of their respective Households. These, by Napoleon's instructions, were arranged with a strict regard to the "Fusion System," that is to say, to his policy of blending the old nobility with the new, and endeavouring to unite both parties for the sup-

[1] Joséphine's mantle was supported by Caroline, Julie, Élisa, Pauline, and Hortense. Julie was almost as bitter about the matter as the Emperor's sisters, though for a different reason. She is said to have declared that "such a duty was painful for a virtuous woman." Hortense was, of course, innocent of all complicity in the amiable intentions of the other princesses.

[2] "I have had the honour of being presented to many 'real princesses'—to employ the phrase of the Faubourg Saint-Germain; but I never saw one who, to my eyes, presented so perfect a personification of elegance and majesty."—Duchess d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*.

[3] Madame de Rémusat, *Mémoires*.

port of his throne. The idea of having for chamberlains and ladies-in-waiting members of the oldest families in France was naturally very gratifying to their Imperial Highnesses, and in this matter, at any rate, they did their utmost to carry out their brother's wishes.

Élisa secured for her Almoner M. de Pansémont, Bishop of Vannes. Her Chamberlain was M. d'Esterno, who was related by marriage to the Caulaincourt family; her *Dame d'honneur* was Madame de la Place, wife of the geometrician, who had lately become Minister of the Interior; while her ladies-in-waiting were Madame Roland de Chambaudoin, wife of a former councillor of the Parlement of Paris, and the *ci-devant* Marquise de Bréhan de Plélo, *née* de Crécy, "a lady as amiable and intelligent as she was good."

Pauline flew at high game, and endeavoured to capture for the post of her First Chamberlain no less a person than the *ci-devant* Duc de la Rochefoucauld-Doudeauville, whom she had met in Rome, when he had paid her considerable attention. But the head of the La Rochefoucaulds considered that between flirting with the wife of Prince Borghese in Rome, and carrying the train of Bonaparte's sister in Paris, there was a good deal of difference, and declined the lady's offer. Another *ci-devant* duke, however—Clermont-Tonnerre to wit,—was less fastidious, probably because the Revolution had reduced him to such poverty that he had been obliged to borrow the

coat in which he made his first appearance at the Imperial Court, and he accepted with alacrity what La Rochefoucauld had refused. Her First Equerry was Louis Marquet de Montbreton, whom she had known when Madame Leclerc—as his country-estate was situated near Montgobert—and who was related by marriage to the Briennes. While among her ladies-in-waiting was Madame de Barral, a young woman of great personal attractions, who had the double distinction of arousing a very lively interest in the breast of the Emperor, and of resisting the Imperial advances.

Caroline, who had placed the Faubourg Saint-Germain in her debt by her intervention on behalf of the Royalists compromised in the conspiracy of Cadoudal and Pichegru, had no difficulty in recruiting her Household from its ranks, and appointed as her Chamberlain M. d'Aligre, "whose name and fortune sufficed, in the Emperor's opinion, to form a banner round which the most adverse parties might rally."[1] M. de Cambis, called *le roi de Perse*, in allusion to his homonym Cambyses, son of Cyrus, was her First Equerry, and the amiable and accomplished Charles de Longchamps her secretary. It would appear that she was, at this moment, anxious to re-establish herself in Joséphine's good graces—presumably after the mantle incident at the Coronation, the Emperor had spoken his mind to his sisters pretty freely, and Caroline had recog-

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*.

nised that she had gone too far—for the majority of the appointments were made on the Empress's recommendation. Thus Barral, Bishop of Meaux, whose mother was a Beauharnais, became her Almoner; Madame Claude de Beauharnais, wife of a cousin of the Empress, her *Dame d'honneur*, and Madame Carra-Saint-Cyr, wife of the general of that name and a personal friend of Joséphine, one of her ladies-in-waiting.

Madame Bonaparte, who, on her arrival in Paris, on December 19, 1804, had taken up her residence at the Hôtel de Brienne, in the Rue Saint-Dominique, which she had purchased, from Lucien, for 600,000 francs, did not begin to form her Household until a much later date than her daughters. The Emperor was, in fact, exceedingly irritated against his mother, and, although he welcomed her very affectionately, he refused for three months to confirm the rank and title he had decided to confer upon her, or to give her any public mark of favour. Not only had she incurred his displeasure by the fervour with which she had espoused the cause of her dear Lucien, but she had hitherto refused to bend to his will in regard to the marriage of Jérôme and Miss Elizabeth Patterson; and, it would appear, had, like Joseph and Lucien, even encouraged that young gentleman to bring his wife to France. Although Jérôme was still under age, and his marriage, contracted without his mother's consent,

was consequently illegal according to French law, unless Letizia could be prevailed upon to enter a formal protest against it, Napoleon might find it exceedingly difficult to set it aside. The Emperor therefore gave her very plainly to understand that, until she consented to sign the documents necessary to constrain Jérôme to obedience, she must expect nothing more from him : no rank, no title, no increase of allowance.

For two months she declined to yield, for all the mother in her rebelled against the idea of forcibly separating her youngest son from a wife to whom he appeared to be so devotedly attached; while she was reluctant to inflict so heavy a punishment upon a young woman, who, if she had consulted her interests rather than her heart, had been far less to blame in the matter than her ambitious relatives. But Napoleon, she knew, would never restore Jérôme to favour on any other terms, but would cast him off, as he had already cast off Lucien ; and the thought of an indefinite separation from another of her children was pain and grief to her. And then she had her own interests to consider. To her, it seemed an unspeakable humiliation that her daughters and daughters-in-law should be Imperial Highnesses, with little Courts of their own, while she, who had given the Emperor birth, who had a better right than any of them to such honours, remained plain Madame Bonaparte. It was more than flesh and blood—certainly more than

Corsican flesh and blood—could be expected to endure; and on February 22, 1805, she gave way, and entered before a notary a solemn protest "against any marriage contracted by her son Jérôme Bonaparte in a foreign country, without her consent and in contempt of the law."

Armed with this document, Napoleon proceeded to make short work of the uxorious Jérôme. On March 2—the eve of his brother's departure with his wife from Baltimore—he issued a decree, which, after citing the aforementioned protest, "forbade all the civil officers of the Empire to receive on their registers the transcription of the certificate of celebration of a pretended marriage which M. Jérôme Bonaparte had contracted in a foreign country." A further decree of March 11 reinforced the former, and declared the marriage null and void, and any children born, or to be born, of the said marriage illegitimate."

On April 8, Jérôme and his wife entered the Bay of Lisbon, only to discover that orders had been issued that on no account was "Miss Patterson" to be allowed to land; and, a fortnight later, we find the Emperor writing to his mother as follows:

M. Jérôme Bonaparte has reached Lisbon with the woman with whom he lives. I have sent orders to this prodigal son to proceed to Milan, by way of Perpignan, Toulouse, Grenoble, and Turin. I have given him to understand that,

if he diverges from this route, he will be arrested. Miss Patterson, who is living with him, has taken the precaution of bringing her brother with her. I have given orders that she should be sent back to America. . . . I shall treat this young man severely, if, in the only interview I shall grant him, he shows himself unworthy of the name he bears, and persists in wishing to continue his intrigue. If he is not prepared to wash out the dishonour he has brought on my name by abandoning his country's flag on sea and land for the sake of a wretched woman, I shall cast him off for ever. . . . On the supposition that he is going to Milan, write to him; tell him that I have been a father to him; that his duty towards me is sacred, and that he has no longer any way of salvation except in following my instructions. Speak to his sisters, that they may write to him also, for when I have passed sentence upon him, I shall be inflexible.

Jérôme was not made of such stern stuff as Lucien, while, unlike his elder brother, he had not his enchantress by his side to encourage him in his resistance. Once separated from his wife, her image soon began to pale, and eighteen months later, the marriage was formally annulled.

A month before the above letter was written, Madame Bonaparte had received the reward of her subserviency to the Imperial will. On March 23, the *Moniteur* announced that she would henceforth bear the title of "*Son Altesse Impériale Madame, mère de l'Empereur*," and, on the same day, a decree conferred upon her the dignity of

"Protectress of the Hospital Sisters and of the Sisters of Charity throughout the whole extent of the Empire." This latter distinction, it is to be feared, she did not appreciate quite so much as might have been expected, since it imposed upon her not only the obligation of presiding at meetings in aid of various charities, at which, owing to her permanent difficulty of expressing herself correctly in French, she was always awkward and constrained, but of occasionally heading subscription lists.

The Emperor himself nominated the members of his mother's Household, since he was well aware that, if he permitted the old lady to exercise her own discretion in the matter, she would promptly surround herself with needy Corsicans, friends and *protégés* of the disgraced Lucien, and such-like undesirable persons. It was composed strictly in accordance with the "Fusion system," the great names of the new and old *régime* being mingled together in almost equal proportions; and consisted of a *dame d'honneur*, four ladies-in-waiting, a reader, a first chamberlain, and two chamberlains-in-ordinary, three equerries, an almoner, two chaplains, an intendant, a chief physician and three surgeons-in-ordinary, and a private secretary, besides minor officials.

Madame de Fontanges, wife of the *ci-devant* Vicomte de Fontanges, who at the beginning of the Revolution was commandant of the southern portion of St. Domingo, was the *Dame d'honneur*.

She was a Creole and a connection of the Empress, and is described as "handsome, inoffensive, and indolent." On her appointment, she was created a Baroness of the Empire. The four ladies-in-waiting were Madame de Fleurieu, whose husband had been Minister of Marine under Louis XVI, "a very respectable and a very virtuous lady, who seemed born to be the attendant of an elderly princess, since she appeared to have been never young herself"; Madame de Saint-Pern, a very charming Creole, who had shared Joséphine's imprisonment in 1793, and the wives of two of the recently created Marshals of the Empire, Mesdames Soult and Davoust. The last-named lady, who was a sister of General Leclerc, soon resigned her post, on the plea of ill-health, and was succeeded by Madame Junot, the future Duchesse d'Abrantès, to whose entertaining *Mémoires* we are indebted for many details concerning *Madame Mère's* little Court.

The *ci-devant* Duc de Brissac, formerly gentleman-in-waiting to the Dauphin and cousin of Madame du Barry's ill-fated lover, who perished during the Versailles massacre in 1792,[1] was the First Chamberlain. "Old, ugly, and a little deformed, he was, at the same time, the kindest and most amiable of men, whilst his wife, who, though not officially attached to *Madame Mère's* Household, came nearly every

[1] See the author's *Madame du Barry* (London, Harpers; New York, Scribners', 1904).

evening to join her circle, was a particularly charming woman and noted for her wit, although she was exceedingly deaf.[1] The First Equerry was General de Beaumont, who had been, like the First Chamberlain, a Court official under the Bourbons, having been one of Louis XVI's pages. This, however, had not prevented him from accepting the Republic and serving in all the campaigns of the Revolution; and in the previous year he had been appointed Inspector-General of Cavalry. He was married to a sister of Maréchal Davoust. The other equerries were Colonel Detres, or d'Estrées, as he called himself, one of the most dashing cavalry leaders in the army, who is said to have received no less than twenty-one wounds in a single engagement in Egypt, and the Baron de Quélen, brother to the

[1] *À propos* of Madame de Brissac's affliction, an amusing anecdote is related. When she was about to be presented to the Emperor, fearful lest she should fail to understand the questions which might be addressed to her, she made careful inquiries as to what his Majesty usually said to ladies on these occasions. She was told that he almost invariably inquired, first, what department the lady came from, secondly, how old she was, and, thirdly, how many children she had. Unfortunately, when Madame de Brissac's turn came, Napoleon inverted the usual order of his questions and began by asking if her husband were not cousin to the Duc de Brissac who was killed at Versailles, and if he had not inherited his estates. "Seine-et-Oise, Sire," replied the lady, under the impression that he had inquired the department in which she had been born. The Emperor glanced at her in some surprise, as he continued: "I believe you have no children." "Fifty-two," answered Madame de Brissac, with an engaging smile, never doubting that the Emperor had inquired her age. Napoleon, in spite of his oft-expressed admiration for ladies with large families, found this a little too much, and abruptly concluded the conversation.

Abbé de Quélen, who subsequently became Archbishop of Paris. Monseigneur de Canaveri, Bishop of Verceil, was her Almoner, and Corvisart, her chief physician. M. Rollier, who had married a connection of the Ramolini, was appointed Intendant, and *Madame's* secretary Guieu, who had accompanied her to Italy, retained his post;[1] while, as a concession to his mother's Corsican predilections, Napoleon permitted her to take into her service two or three of her cousins. Her old confidential servant Saveria, of course, remained with her.

The Duchesse d'Abrantès has left us an interesting, and, without doubt, a faithful, portrait of Letizia Bonaparte at the time of her elevation.

"At the time when she became *Madame Mère*, she was probably fifty-three or four years of age. Her stature was that most agreeable in woman, about five feet four inches, but, as she grew older, the breadth of her shoulders increased, and thus she appeared shorter than she really was, though she retained the firmness and dignity of her carriage. Her feet were the most remarkably small and the most perfectly shaped that I have ever beheld. A defect in her right hand was conspicuous in one otherwise so beautiful; a clumsily-performed operation, which had destroyed the nerve, rendered it impossible for her to bend

[1] On his death, which occurred in 1810, he was succeeded by M. Decazes, the future favourite and Prime Minister of Louis XVIII.

the forefinger; this had a singular effect when she was playing cards. At this period, her teeth were still perfect, and, like all the Bonapartes, she had a charming smile and a countenance full of vivacity and intelligence. Her eyes were small and very black; but their expression was never ill-natured, which cannot be said for some of her children.

"In her person, Madame was very fastidious, and always took care to dress in conformity with her age and station. She made, in short, a more dignified appearance than some princes and princesses I have seen, who stood sadly in need of their royal titles to distinguish them from the commonalty. Her timidity and her want of fluency in the French language exposed her to great inconvenience in the situation which she occupied, and she experienced real nervousness in the presence of persons who were presented to her, as she dreaded the sarcastic observations in which they might indulge. She possessed great tact and shrewdness of judgment; she comprehended at a single glance the disposition of persons who approached her."[1]

As his mother was as yet unprovided with a country residence, Napoleon, in the following June, purchased for her the château and estate of Pont-sur-Seine, situated in the midst of charming scenery, on the banks of the Seine, between

[1] *Mémoires.*

Provins and Troyes.[1] The Emperor, who was then in Italy, the crown of which he had just assumed, announced his gift in the following manner:

Bologna

June 24, 1805

Madame, — I have purchased for you the Château of Pont. Send your Intendant to look over it and to take possession. It is my intention to grant 60,000 francs to furnish it.

You thus become the owner of one of the most charming estates in France, which I believe you visited ten years ago. It is much more beautiful than Brienne.[2] I hope that you will see in what I have done a new proof of my desire to please you.

Your very affectionate son,

Napoleon[3]

[1] "The Château of Pont had been built in 1630, by the architect Le Muet, for Bouthillier de Chavigny, the Surintendant des Finances, in whose family it remained until 1773, when it was sold to Rohan, Archbishop of Bordeaux, who, in his turn, disposed of it to Prince Xavier of Saxony, uncle of Louis XVI. After the emigration of this prince, it became national property, but, in 1799, it passed to one Benoît Gouly, from whom the Emperor now purchased it."—M. Frédéric Masson, *Napoléon et sa famille.*

[2] A château in the neighbourhood belonging to the Brienne family.

[3] Published by Baron Larrey, *Madame Mère.*

CHAPTER XIX

Pretensions of Letizia and her daughters—Complaisance of Caroline and Murat towards the Emperor—Honours and riches showered upon them—Discontent of Élisa—She desires to leave France, and persuades Napoleon to bestow upon her the Principality of Piombino—Her departure for Italy—The Republic of Lucca, having petitioned the Emperor to give the State a new Constitution and a prince of his family to govern it, is joined to Piombino—Entry of Félix and Élisa into Lucca—Pauline in Paris—Borghese becomes a French citizen—His wife, tired of his society, persuades the Emperor to appoint him to a cavalry regiment and send him to the camp of Boulogne—Pauline becomes Princess and Duchess of Guastalla, but cedes her duchy to the Kingdom of Italy, in return for an annual indemnity—She quarrels with her husband—Her journey to Plombières—A costly shower-bath—Auguste de Forbin, painter and *homme aux bonnes fortunes*—He becomes the lover of the Princess, who appoints him her chamberlain.

THUS, thanks to their importunities and the weakness of Napoleon where his womenfolk were concerned, all the ladies of the Bonaparte family found themselves provided with titles, splendid establishments, and princely allowances. But they were very far from satisfied. *Madame Mère* considered that her pension of 300,000 francs was totally inadequate to enable her to maintain the dignity of her position—it was, as a matter of fact, ample, though it did not permit her to gratify her master passion, and she tormented Napoleon with applications for an

increase; while her daughters sighed for kingdoms of their own, or at least for principalities.

Caroline, by far the most astute, as well as the least scrupulous of the sisters, played a skilful game. Aware that it was to the Emperor alone that she must look for the gratification of her ambitions, and that in the past she had given him but too much cause for dissatisfaction, she now entirely separated her fortunes from those of Joseph, and strove to humour his caprices and flatter his vanity in every conceivable way. It was she who conducted the preliminaries of his *liaison* with that mysterious lady of the Empress's Household, whose identity chroniclers, or their publishers, have declined to reveal, in deference to the reputation of the frail beauty in question, and the susceptibilities of her descendants;[1] who, in conjunction with Fouché, endeavoured, though unsuccessfully, to induce Madame Récamier to accept the post of *dame du palais* and "exercise over the Emperor's mind a mighty influence, which would be wholly for good";[2] who, alone among the ladies of the Imperial Family, had sufficient stoicism to retain her place upon the grand-stand on the Champ-de-Mars, and face the driving snow and biting wind, the day when the Eagles were distributed to the troops, and this notwithstanding the fact that she was six months

[1] M. Frédéric Masson, *Napoleon et les femmes.*

[2] For a full account of this affair see the author's *Madame Récamier and Her Friends* (Harpers, 1901).

enceinte. In short, there were no limits to her amiability and her complaisance where his Majesty was concerned; while Murat, acting on his wife's instructions, was equally accommodating, equally anxious to please, ready to accept any mission with which the Emperor chose to entrust him, to discharge any duty however distasteful with the best grace in the world.

Such prudent conduct did not fail of its reward; honours and riches were showered upon the politic pair. In the space of a few weeks, Murat, already a Marshal of the Empire, was nominated chief of the 12th Cohort of the Legion of Honour, Grand Eagle of the Legion, Grand Admiral, and Prince of the Empire, though his joy at receiving this last distinction was somewhat damped by the fact that Eugène de Beauharnais had been raised to the rank of Serene Highness at the same time, and that the terms in which the Emperor announced to the Senate the two creations showed only too plainly the gulf which divided his stepson from his brother-in-law in his affections. The salaries attached to the new prince's offices, joined to Caroline's pension on the Grande Cassette, brought the annual official income of the Murats to close upon 1,000,000 francs.

To his sister, Napoleon was equally generous. On December 31, 1804, he gave her, by way of a New Year's gift, the sum of 200,000 francs, part of which sum the lady appears to have expended in causing the room in which she proposed to lie

in to be hung in rose-coloured satin, and the windows and bed to be provided with curtains of Mechlin lace,[1] and when, amid these costly surroundings, Louise Julie Caroline Murat came into the world, the Emperor crowned his munificence by presenting the happy mother with that splendid mansion once the hôtel of Madame de Pompadour, and to-day the residence of the President of the Third Republic—the Elysée.

If Caroline had every reason to be contented with her position at the Imperial Court, it was far otherwise with her eldest sister. To her intense mortification, Élisa found that, relatively speaking, she had lost rather than gained in importance by the events of the last few months. In the days when she had done the honours of Lucien's hôtel and dispensed his patronage, she had been the centre of a galaxy of poets, painters, and aspiring politicians, who had vied with one another in chanting her praises and soliciting her protection. Now Lucien was in disgrace, and, as her influence over the Emperor was known to be very slight, notwithstanding that she had become an Imperial Highness, she was no longer courted as of yore; indeed, there were days when her salon was comparatively deserted. Even Fontanes, once so assiduous in his attentions, now visited her but seldom, pleading the pressure of his political duties.

[1] Madame de Rémusat, *Mémoires*.

Nor did she see any prospect of improving her position, so long as she remained in France. Joséphine, Julie, Hortense, the wife whom Jérôme would take—if he consented to repudiate his American bride—and her mother, must all take precedence of her; while Caroline, as the wife of the Governor of Paris and one of the highest officials of the Empire, was a person of far greater importance, and possessed of means which enabled her to completely eclipse her sister. Moreover, she recognised that Baciocchi's indolence and ineptitude disqualified him for any high post, either civil or military, and consequently for the dignity of a Prince of the Empire, and, although she was wholly indifferent to that worthy's feelings in the matter, it was galling to her pride to reflect that the husbands of Pauline and Caroline were princes, while her own remained a simple gentleman. She perceived only one remedy for the humiliating situation to which she found herself reduced, namely, to expatriate herself, to persuade Napoleon to bestow upon her a fief of the Empire, which would provide Baciocchi with the title she desired for him, and herself with a position which there would be none to dispute.

Such a fief was just then at Napoleon's disposal, in the shape of the little principality of Piombino, in the province of Pisa, which had been ruled in turn by the families of Appiani, Ludovici, and Buoncompagni, under the suze-

rainty, first, of Spain and, subsequently, of the Two Sicilies, down to the spring of 1799, when the Neapolitan Government ceded its rights over it to France. The First Consul, however, was in no hurry to exercise them, and the reigning prince, or rather a governor-general appointed by him, was allowed to remain in possession until July 1803, when Murat, in his capacity of general-in-chief of the French forces in Italy, issued a decree annexing Piombino to France, and appointing Cambis, an officer on his staff, administrator. In September of the following year, Cambis was replaced by Carteaux, under whom Napoleon had served at Toulon in 1793, with the title of "Commandant of the State of Piombino for his Majesty the Emperor of the French." Carteaux seems to have been extremely popular with the inhabitants of the little State, but the Emperor was far from satisfied with the manner in which he discharged his duties. This inclined him to lend a very favourable ear to his sister's intimation that its vacant crown might fittingly adorn her own head, since he recognised that it would be to his advantage to have a State which was isolated from the other possessions of the Empire, and to which he looked to maintain his communications with the Isle of Elba and Corsica, under the control of a properly-constituted government.

Moreover, Napoleon felt that both Élisa and her husband could well be spared from his Court.

Of all the members of his family, with the possible exception of Lucien, his eldest sister was the one with whom he was least in sympathy, perhaps because she was the one whose character most resembled his own. Her imperious manners, her pretensions to knowledge,[1] her ill-concealed animosity towards Joséphine, her ambitious and intriguing disposition, which might very well lead her to make her salon a rendezvous, if not a focus, of opposition, were to him sources of continual irritation. As for Baciocchi, not only had he displayed the most hopeless incapacity in every position in which he had been placed, but the elevation of his wife had proved too much for his native vanity, and his colleagues in the Senate complained that he was quite insupportable. Altogether, the translation of the pair to Italy seemed a politic move, and one which might save him a good deal of unpleasantness in the future. For which reasons, after some little hesitation, he decided to accord Élisa the promotion she desired.

Accordingly, on March 18, 1805, the Emperor announced, in a message to the Senate, that he gave the State of Piombino to the Princess Élisa, his sister, and recognised her as Hereditary Princess, "subject to the paramount authority of France," and that he conferred upon her husband

[1] "You are the caricature of the Duchesse du Maine," Napoleon once exclaimed, after a heated argument with Élisa regarding the merits of his favourite dramatist, Corneille.

"the name and title of Prince of Piombino, and the names and prerogatives of a French prince." His Majesty added that this State was badly administered, that it was to the interests of France to put an end to such a condition of affairs, and that the donation must not be considered as "the proof of a particular affection, but as an action in conformity with sound policy."

The title of Prince of Piombino conferred on Baciocchi was a mere courtesy title, which did not imply any proprietary rights, or even a share in the administration, for the Decree dated the same day declared that the principality was "ceded and given in full ownership to the Princess Élisa." Other articles stipulated that the succession should be vested in her male descendants in the direct line, that no one should succeed until he had received investiture from the Emperor, that none of her children should marry without his Majesty's consent, and that she should keep in her pay a force sufficient for the defence of the coast, and take every precaution to maintain the communications between the Continent and Elba.

Great was the joy of Élisa on finding herself a reigning princess. "This little country [Piombino], Sire," she wrote to Napoleon, "is surrounded on all sides by settlements formed by Leopold for the prosperity of Tuscany. Leopold was *only the brother of an Emperor of Germany*, and to-day Austria only exists and preserves her

dynasty through the magnanimity of her conqueror, my august brother and sovereign. Leopold was ambitious to possess Piombino ; he was unable to become its master, and, by a word, your Majesty has made me sovereign of this little principality."[1]

On April 19, Élisa set out for Italy. Napoleon had granted her a *gratification extraordinaire* of 150,000 francs, for the expenses of the journey, and she was accompanied by a suite which could not fail to impress her future subjects : a chamberlain, a *dame d'honneur*, two ladies-in-waiting, a physician, four waiting-women, a *maître d'hotel*, eight servants, and two couriers. On her arrival at Turin, she had an audience of the Emperor, who was on his way to Milan, to assume the crown of Italy, and to that city she accompanied him. Baciocchi was despatched to Piombino, to take possession in his wife's name ; but Élisa, on the plea of ill-health, remained in Milan, and when she left, it was to Genoa, and not to her principality, that she made her way. The ostensible object of her journey was to visit Jérôme, who was stationed there, and to remonstrate with him on the error of his ways ; but her real motive was very different.

Napoleon's former patron Salicetti, with whom Élisa was on very friendly terms, was at this time actively engaged in endeavouring to persuade the republican states of the peninsula to

[1] Published by Rodocanachi, *Élisa Napoléon en Italie.*

ÉLISA BONAPARTE ON THE THRONE OF LUCCA

FROM THE STATUE BY LORENZO BARTOLINI

apply for incorporation in the Kingdom of Italy. By the aid of a generous distribution of bribes, he soon contrived to convince the Government of the Ligurian or Genoese Republic of the wisdom of such a step, and he had every reason to anticipate a similar result at Lucca.

Now Élisa, who had begun to realise that to be Princess of Piombino was not quite so fine a thing as she had at first imagined, that, as a matter of fact, a principality of twenty thousand inhabitants smacked somewhat of comic opera, had conceived the ambition of becoming Princess of Lucca as well, and had engaged Salicetti to sound that republic upon the matter. The crafty Corsican depicted the advantages which Lucca would derive from this arrangement in such glowing colours, that, on June 4, the Gonfaloniere and the Ancients decreed, subject to the consent of the people, that a petition should be presented to the Emperor of the French praying him to give to their republic a new Constitution and a prince of his family to govern it. The fact that the Luccans had had the bad taste to prefer a prince to a princess wounded Élisa's *amour-propre* not a little; but she was consoled by the reflection that, though Félix might reign, it would certainly be she who would govern.

Napoleon hesitated for a while, since he would have preferred to have incorporated Lucca in his Kingdom of Italy, rather than permit it to retain a nominal independence. However, the impor-

tunities of Élisa eventually prevailed, and, on June 24, he gave audience to a deputation from the republic at Bologna, when he informed them that he would "fulfil their wish and confide their government to a prince endeared to him by ties of blood." The same day, he nominated Baciocchi, Prince of Lucca, with the title of Prince of Lucca and Piombino, and the qualification of Most Serene Highness, and declared himself protector of their State and guarantor of their Constitution. This Constitution contained elaborate provisions for the government of the State on a democratic basis, for the safeguarding of popular privileges, the maintenance of the Catholic religion in all its rights, and so forth. But into these it is needless to enter, since Félix—or rather Élisa—never troubled to observe them, and at the end of a few months they were to all intents and purposes abrogated. The Luccans engaged to provide their sovereign with a palace in the town and another in the country, with a suitable estate attached to the latter.

On July 14, 1805, Élisa and Félix made their entry into Lucca, with great pomp. The chief officials of the principality, accompanied by a hundred horsemen of the Imperial Guard, sent by Napoleon, and four detachments of guards of honour, furnished by the chief Italian cities, met them on the frontier, in the beautiful valley of Nievole, one of the most picturesque spots of that quarter of Italy, where, after an address

of welcome had been presented and duly acknowledged, an imposing procession was formed. First came a detachment of the guards of honour; then, the carriages of the chamberlains, the ladies-in-waiting, and the Ministers, and that of General Hédouville, Ambassador-Extraordinary from the Emperor, charged to hand to the new prince a sword, in token of the protection which his Majesty guaranteed to the principality of Lucca; next, another detachment of guards of honour, preceding the carriage of their Imperial and Most Serene Highnesses—a most gorgeous equipage, drawn by six splendid horses and escorted by the same number of mounted equerries. Behind the carriage came the Prince's charger, richly caparisoned—for Félix intended to make an equestrian entry—the cavalry of the Imperial Guard and the carriages of the rest of their Highnesses' suite; while the remaining two companies of guards of honour brought up the rear.

On nearing the city, Félix, who was "habited in the splendid costume of a French prince," alighted from his carriage and mounted his charger—it must have been a more than usually docile beast, since its august burden seems to have been a deplorable horseman—and preceded his consort into their good town of Lucca.

At the gates, he was met by the Archbishop of Lucca, Filippo Sardi, who presented him with the keys, after which, amid the acclamations of

the citizens, the booming of artillery, and the ringing of bells, the *cortège* wended its way to the cathedral, where a solemn service was held, the Prince and Princess worshipping beneath a canopy held over their heads by the canons. At its conclusion, the archbishop handed to each of them a ring which he had consecrated, as symbolising, with the hand of justice, the sovereign authority, and blessed the sword sent by Napoleon, which Hédouville presented to the Prince. Finally, the Emperor's decree was read; Félix swore upon the Gospels to observe the Constitution, and the herald-at-arms proclaimed him Prince of Lucca and Piombino, and invited all present to join with him in crying: "*Evviva Loro Altezze Serenissima Imperiale!*"

This installation was followed by fêtes and balls, which lasted for several days; and so much money was spent that the authorities were obliged to have recourse to a "voluntary loan," in order to defray the expenses into which their too enthusiastic loyalty had tempted them.[1]

On her return to France, in the autumn of 1804, Napoleon had raised Pauline's allowance to 240,000 francs, the amount which her sisters enjoyed, and, for the moment, that lady asked nothing more of her brother, except to be allowed

[1] Archives des Affaires Etrangères, Lucques; Masson, *Napoléon et sa famille;* Rodocanachi, *Élisa Napoléon en Italie.*

to remain in France. This he could scarcely refuse her, as she was in delicate health and for some weeks scarcely left her hôtel. On March 27, 1805, a decree of Napoleon conferred the rights of a French citizen upon Camillo Borghese, "to whom," observed the President of the Senate, "has been entrusted the care of rendering happy the widow of a brave man and the sister of a hero." This announcement greatly delighted Pauline, who saw in it an assurance that she would not be compelled to return to Rome, and by Holy Thursday she had so far recovered as to be able to appear at the annual parade of beauty and fashion at Longchamps in a most dazzling toilette.

In the following June, while the Emperor was in Italy, she installed herself at the Petit-Trianon, which had not been inhabited since the Revolution, but which, by Napoleon's orders, had lately been completely renovated. She was accompanied by Borghese, who, finding that there was no prospect of his wife returning to Rome, had decided to join her in Paris. The poor man, however, soon found, to his cost, that "the task of rendering happy the widow of a brave man and the sister of a hero" was one altogether beyond his powers, and the lady no longer attempted to conceal the ennui which his society occasioned her. When, on his return from Italy, Napoleon came to pay his sister a visit, Pauline assured him, with the most pathetic earnestness,

that nothing would contribute so much to her complete restoration to health as a temporary separation from her husband, and besought him to nominate the prince to some post which would necessitate his speedy departure. The Emperor consented to humour her, and, a few days later, appointed Borghese a major in the Grenadiers-à-cheval of the Guard, with an intimation that, so soon as he had acquired some knowledge of the duties of a cavalry officer, he would give him the command of a regiment. The prince's pleasure at this appointment was, however, considerably discounted when, the very next morning, he received orders to depart immediately for the camp of Boulogne, though his brother-in-law, to console him for his exile from the capital, bestowed upon him one of the *Toisons d'or* which the King of Spain had recently sent to the Emperor for distribution among the members of the Imperial Family and the Grand Dignitaries of the Empire.

After the departure of her husband, Pauline's health underwent a most astonishing improvement, and during the remainder of that summer the Petit-Trianon was almost as gay as it had been in the days of Marie Antoinette. In the autumn, she returned to the capital, and all Paris flocked to her brilliant receptions at the Hôtel Charost, where, to quote the *Moniteur*, "the young Princess received with the graces that are natural to her and make her generally

beloved." Towards the middle of January, however, she fell ill again, shut herself up in her apartments, and denied herself to every one. This relapse, by a singular coincidence, synchronised almost to the very day with the return of Borghese, who had lately been appointed colonel of the 1st Carabiniers. His regiment was stationed at Lunéville, but, tired of provincial life, he had come to beg the Emperor to transfer it to Versailles. To Pauline's intense chagrin, her brother consented, and, though she was compelled to assist at some of the brilliant entertainments given in honour of the Emperor's return from the campaign of Austerlitz, and even to give a ball to his Majesty, it was remarked that she was not entirely herself again until the beginning of March, when urgent private affairs summoned the superfluous husband to Italy.

The reappearance of Borghese was not the only trial which the poor lady was called upon to endure in the course of that winter. The adoption of Joséphine's niece, Stéphanie de Beauharnais, a girl of seventeen, by Napoleon, her elevation to the rank of Imperial Princess, with precedence over all the other princesses, even over *Madame Mère*, and, finally, her marriage to the Hereditary Prince of Baden, aroused in her feelings of the most violent jealousy and mortification; and it was only by the Emperor's express commands that she

consented to grace the wedding festivities with her presence.[1]

However, compensation for this vexation was soon forthcoming, for when, on March 30, 1806, the decrees which instituted the constitution of the Grand Empire were communicated to the Senate, Pauline found she had not been forgotten. "The Principality of Guastalla[2] being at our disposal," ran the fifth decree, "we have disposed of it in favour of the Princess Pauline, to enjoy it in full ownership, under the titles of Princess and Duchess of Guastalla. It is our intention that the Prince Borghese her husband should bear the titles of Prince and Duke of Guastalla, and that this principality be handed down to the male descendants, legitimate and natural of our sister Pauline, and, in default of male descendants, we reserve to ourselves the right of disposing of the Principality of Guastalla at our will, and as we shall judge best for the welfare of our people and the interests of our crown."

[1] There was certainly some excuse for Pauline's indignation, as Mlle. de Beauharnais's head seems to have been completely turned by her good fortune, and she gave herself the most insufferable airs. "She considered," writes Madame de Rémusat, "that she did the young Prince honour by accepting his addresses, and every one tried in vain to make her regard the matter in a more reasonable light. She professed herself ready to wed the Prince whenever it was arranged that she should do so, but always maintained that a daughter of Napoleon might mate with kings or the sons of kings."

[2] Guastalla had formed part of the Duchies of Parma and Placentia, but had been ceded to France, in 1803, when the reigning duke became King of Etruria.

Pauline was overjoyed at the idea of being a reigning princess; but when, on inquiry, she learned that her principality was a tiny state, with an area of about six square miles, and that its capital was merely a country-town, with a population of some 3,000 souls, a large proportion of whom were beggars, she shed tears of mortification, and declared that no earthly consideration should induce her to reside there. The Emperor thereupon suggested that she should cede Guastalla to his Kingdom of Italy, in return for a money indemnity, while preserving the title and the allodial estates. To this proposition she readily assented, and the price was fixed at 6,000,000 francs on the Italian Treasury; but Napoleon subsequently induced her to accept an annual payment of 400,000 francs in lieu of the capital sum, which, with 50,000 francs from the allodial estates, brought her total revenues from the principality up to 450,000 francs. As, however, in consideration of these new sources of income, she was called upon to renounce her pension upon the Grande Cassette, together with the annual *gratification* which she had been in the habit of receiving, she gained little from Guastalla except the title.[1]

At the end of April, Borghese returned to Paris, and had several stormy scenes with his wife, occasioned, it would appear, by the too frequent visits her Imperial Highness was receiving

[1] M. Frédéric Masson, *Napoléon et sa famille.*

from a certain dangerously fascinating count, about whose identity the chroniclers of the time decline to enlighten us. Pauline, as usual, had the best of the argument, and the prince was obliged to seek consolation for the indifference of his consort in the smiles of less exacting beauties and in the excitement of the chase; while Pauline partook herself to the Petit-Trianon and resumed the round of gaieties which had marked her residence there during the previous summer.

In July, she set out for Plombières, taking with her nearly the whole of her Household and such an enormous quantity of impedimenta that the *cortège* might have been mistaken for the baggage-train of a small army. As she was still in somewhat delicate health, and imagined herself to be infinitely worse than she was, her caprices were endless, and the prefects and other officials whose privilege it was to offer the august traveller hospitality, found the honour of entertaining her one which they would gladly have been excused.

It was her practice when travelling to take at the end of each day's journey a bath of hot milk, followed by a shower-bath of cold milk, to refresh her after the fatigues she had undergone. At Bar-sur-Ornain she was the guest of M. Leclerc, one of her late husband's brothers, who happened to be at this time Prefect of the Department of the Meuse, and the best apartments

in the Préfecture were of course made ready for her reception. "Where is my bath, my dear little brother?" was her first question, on being shown to her room; and M. Leclerc, who had already been advised by letter of her requirements, replied that the milk was already being warmed. "And the shower-bath?" she inquired. The prefect, with many excuses, intimated that he feared she would have to forego that luxury, since there was not such an apparatus to be found in the whole town. "Then you must give orders for your servants to make holes in the ceiling of my bedroom, just over the bath," rejoined the lady, laughing gaily. "I am sorry to inconvenience you, my dear little brother, but a shower-bath is necessary to my health."

The unfortunate prefect did not dare to refuse, and Pauline enjoyed her shower-bath none the less for the knowledge that it had necessitated the ruin of the beautifully-painted ceiling of her brother-in-law's guest-chamber.[1]

The princess's arrival at Plombières aroused no small sensation among the visitors to that fashionable watering-place. As she believed that the slightest physical exertion was injurious to her health, she had herself carried about in a hammock by two enormous negroes whom she had brought from St. Domingo; while another negro—a bandy-legged dwarf of the most hideous aspect—waddled by its side. Then, she replaced

[1] Duchesse de Reggio, *Récits de guerre et de foyer.*

the hammock by a sedan-chair, upholstered in white taffeta, which was borne by five tall lackeys in green and gold liveries. Finally, she had a litter constructed after the old Spanish and Italian models, and purchased four splendid mules to draw it. But, unfortunately, the animals were so restive that all attempts of her First Equerry to train them proved abortive, and the princess was reluctantly compelled to forego the delights of creating yet another sensation.

Pauline's health improved wonderfully at Plombières, though this appears to have been due less to the benefit she derived from its waters than to the fact that she encountered there a person who aroused in her fickle little heart as near an approach to a *grande passion* as she was capable of entertaining.

Louis Nicolas Philippe Auguste de Forbin—for that was the name of this happy individual—was a member of one of the most ancient and distinguished families of Provence, and was at this time about twenty-nine years of age. By the Revolution his family had been completely ruined, and he had seen his father and uncle killed before his eyes during the siege of Lyons. Forced to earn his bread, like so many more of the noblesse, he resolved to turn some little artistic talent he possessed to account, and studied painting under Boissieu at Lyons, and, subsequently, under Demarne and David in Paris. At the Salon of 1796 he exhibited for

the first time, and after 1799 he was usually represented on its walls by one or more paintings, chiefly historical subjects. Although his early works were at best but mediocre productions, they did not want for admirers, and he never experienced any difficulty in finding purchasers. There can be no doubt, however, that it was to his popularity in society, rather than to his artistic skill, that he was indebted for his success.

And his popularity was immense; no one—at least among the ladies—seems to have been able to resist his handsome face, his fine figure, his charming and unaffected manners, his gay and witty conversation, and the romantic aureole with which his gallant struggle against Fortune had surrounded him. "Women doted upon him." "I know not," writes one of his fair admirers, many years later, "whether I am affected by the prejudices of persons who are growing old, but I can say, with a feeling of profound conviction, that you will not find at the present day men so attractive, for their talents, their manners, and their personal appearance, as were numbers who figured at the time of which I am speaking. But, among them, M. de Forbin was particularly distinguished. His face was handsome, his figure exceptionally fine, and even his conversation was remarkable for grace and elegance. How envy and jealousy have sought to rob him of his deserts! But that has not prevented his abilities

being transcendent in painting, in poetry, and in literature, and from making him the most delightful of drawing-room companions and the most agreeable to listen to."[1]

In 1799, M. de Forbin, finding his professional income altogether inadequate for a gentleman of his elegant and refined tastes, condescended to espouse one of his numerous female worshippers, a certain Mlle. de Dortans, who possessed a handsome fortune. This did not, however, prevent him from continuing to accept the homage which was so freely offered him from all quarters, and after three years of married life, Madame de Forbin's jealousy began to occasion him so much inconvenience that he decided to separate from her. The freedom of action which he gained by this step, however, was counterbalanced by the fact that he had no longer any one to pay his debts, and at the moment of his visit to Plombières, he was on the verge of bankruptcy. But he was not the man to permit such a trifle as this to disturb his serenity, and was as amiable and charming as though he had not a care in the wide world.

The fascinating painter made a most favourable impression upon Pauline, who received the delicate attentions which he soon began to pay her with even more than her usual graciousness. She had had numerous *soupirants* since those far-off days when Stanislas Fréron, in his

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires.*

egregious square-tailed coat and rose-coloured breeches, had made love to her on the Mediterranean shore, and too many of them, it is to be feared, had not sighed in vain. But no one had touched her heart quite in the same way as this man, who united to a form and features which reminded her of one of the Greek statues in the Palazzo Borghese, the culture of the scholar, the refined tastes of the artist, the sensibility of the poet, the assurance of the man of the world, and the manners of the *grand seigneur.*

And Forbin? Well, he was a painter and a lover of the beautiful, and Pauline could not fail to make a powerful appeal to his artistic temperament. Besides, he was hopelessly in debt, and such a *bonne fortune* promised him a sure and easy way out of his difficulties.

He begged permission to paint her Imperial Highness's portrait; it was graciously accorded him. The *séances* were many, for M. de Forbin was too fastidious an artist to be a rapid worker, and, then, had he not a subject worthy of the brush of a Titian or a Rembrandt? Before the portrait was completed, the princess found the society of the painter so necessary to her happiness that she decided it would be impossible to live apart from him. Accordingly, when, at the end of September, she returned to Paris, where she found her husband on the point of setting out with his Carabiniers for the war against Prussia,

Forbin followed her, and was appointed one of her chamberlains.[1]

Moreover, she made no secret of the favour with which she regarded him, but dragged him about with her everywhere, and exhibited him to her friends as though he were some rare breed of lap-dog. One day, she called upon Madame Junot, who was ill and confined to her bed. "My dear Laurette," she cried, "do you know my new chamberlain?" "No, Madame, who is he?" "M. de Forbin. What, my dear Laurette, do you not know him?" "She leaned over me," continues the chronicler, "and pulled at once the three bell-ropes at the head of my bed. My *valet de chambre* and women came running in all together. 'Send in the gentleman who is waiting in the salon,' said she to the *valet de chambre*, "and in walked M. de Forbin."

As to that gentleman, he found his new *métier* a much more lucrative, as well as a more agreeable, one than painting historical pictures. He governed not only the princess, but her whole

[1] Before going to Paris, Forbin seems to have paid a visit to Geneva, where he met Chateaubriand, who found him "in a state of beatitude. He displayed in his looks the inner felicity with which he was inundated; his feet did not touch the ground. Wafted on his talents and his felicities, he came down from the mountain as though from the sky, with his painter's jacket, his pallet on his thumb, his brushes in a quiver. A good fellow, nevertheless, though excessively gallant. . . . His eyes showed a protecting compassion: I was poor, humble, uncertain of myself, and I did not hold the hearts of princesses in my mighty hands." —*Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe.*

Household; everything passed through his hands, and a good deal remained in them; and before many weeks had passed, he was driving one of the most elegant equipages in Paris, and tradesmen who had frowned at the mention of his name were vying with one another in soliciting the continuance of his esteemed patronage.

CHAPTER XX

Caroline's skilful tactics secure for Murat the Duchies of Berg and Clèves—Attempted annexations of Murat—Position of the Grand-Duke of Berg in the Confederation of the Rhine—His greed and arrogance—His quarrel with Napoleon over Wesel —Caroline in Paris during the Prussian and Polish campaigns —She exercises her fascinations upon Junot, Governor of Paris, who becomes completely infatuated with her—Secret motive of her conduct—Anger of Napoleon—His interview with Junot, who is removed from his post as Governor of Paris and sent as Ambassador to Lisbon—Dissatisfaction of *Madame Mère* with the provision made for her—Her letter to the Emperor— Increase of her pension—Her life at the Château of Pont— She is reprimanded by Napoleon—She assists at the fêtes in honour of the Peace of Tilsit—She arranges an interview between the Emperor and Lucien at Mantua—Her parsimony —Her generosity to her children.

CAROLINE, thanks to the skilful tactics which she pursued with the Emperor, and to the services which her husband had rendered at the head of the cavalry of the Grand Army during the campaign of 1805, found herself elevated to a position superior to that of either of her sisters.

By the Treaty of Schönbrunn (December 15, 1805) the King of Prussia had ceded "in full ownership and sovereignty the Duchy of Clèves to the Prince of the Holy Roman Empire who should be nominated by the Emperor Napoleon."

On the following day, the King of Bavaria had ceded to Napoleon the same rights over the Duchy of Berg, in exchange for the Margravate of Anspach, ceded by Prussia, a few hours earlier.

The Emperor immediately formed the design of uniting Clèves and Berg into a single State, under the rule of a French prince, and of thereby establishing a counterpoise to Prussian influence in the lower valley of the Rhine. Caroline, who received early intimation of her brother's intentions, if not from Napoleon himself, from the indiscretions of Talleyrand, with whom she was at this moment on very friendly terms, was not long in deciding to press the claims of Murat to the throne in question. To a lady of her aspiring character, such a principality was of course nothing but a *pis aller*, a mere stage on the road to Fortune. But she was eager to become a reigning princess, and, for the moment, nothing more suitable presented itself. Besides, the united duchies had the advantage of being quite close to France—from the frontier of Clèves to Paris was but a journey of some ninety leagues—the population was industrious and contented, there were several ducal residences, a fair revenue, and, finally, if the State were a small one, Germany was a country which offered to an enterprising prince infinite possibilities of extending his frontiers.

Her decision once made, Caroline proceeded to manœuvre and intrigue to attain her end with

her customary skill and unscrupulousness. She endeavoured to divert the Emperor by fêtes, and to please him by that display which he considered one of the first duties of the members of the Imperial Family; she lent him her house, if any sudden amorous fancy rendered it useful as a rendezvous, and connived at his *liaison* with Éléonore Denuelle, one of her old schoolfellows at Madame Campan's;[1] she interested herself in every detail of the etiquette which he wished to introduce; she assumed airs of dignity which led him to declare that his sister was in every way fitted to be a queen; she paid great attention to Maret, whose obsequious devotion to his master had procured him considerable influence, and, at the risk of mortally offending Talleyrand, she flattered Fouché into a zealous attachment to herself. In her efforts, she was ably seconded by Murat, who continued to show entire submission to the Emperor's will and bore his Majesty's alternations of temper without so much as a murmur.[2]

Their perseverance was crowned by success. On March 9, 1806, Napoleon sent orders to Murat to take possession of Wesel and Düsseldorf. On the 15th, by a solemn decree, he conferred upon the Prince Joachim, his well-beloved brother-in-law, the Duchies of Berg and

[1] For a full account of this affair, see M. Frédéric Masson, *Napoléon et les femmes.*

[2] Madame de Rémusat, *Mémoires.*

Clèves, "to be in all their extent and plenitude possessed by him, and to be transmitted by inheritance to his legitimate and natural descendants, from male to male in order of primogeniture, and to the perpetual exclusion of women and their descendants." If Joachim had no heirs, the duchies were to pass to the descendants of the Emperor, and, in default, to those of Joseph, and then to those of Louis, provided that in no case might they be joined to the Crown of France. The heir-presumptive would bear the title of Duke of Clèves, and to the ducal dignity was to be attached, by inheritance, that of Grand Admiral of France.[1]

By March 21, all had been accomplished in accordance with the orders of the Emperor: Murat's aide-de-camp, General Beaumont, had taken possession of Wesel, the Bavarian garrison had evacuated Düsseldorf, and "Joachim, Prince and Admiral of France, Duke of Berg and Clèves," had issued his first proclamation to his people.

Four days later, accompanied by a brilliant escort, the new sovereign made his entrance into Düsseldorf, dressed in the superb uniform of a Marshal of the Empire and decorated with all his orders—Legion of Honour, Iron Crown, and Black Eagle—where he met with a very enthusiastic reception. On the morrow, clothed in a

[1] MM. Jules Chavanon and Georges Sainte-Yves, *Joachim Murat.*

Spanish costume of the most costly description, he assisted at Mass at the cathedral, took the usual oaths, and delivered a speech, thanking his subjects for the devotion they had testified towards his person and promising them his protection.

Scarcely had his investiture been completed, than Murat began to attempt annexations. At the end of March, his troops occupied the old Church lands of Essen and Werden, on the ground that they were comprised in the cession of Clèves, to the intense indignation of Prussia, who looked upon these districts as her own. Blücher, who had commanded for Prussia in the Duchy of Clèves, and had only evacuated it with the greatest reluctance and after repeated orders from his Government, immediately marched in his soldiers, tore down Murat's proclamations, and restored his country's flag. A serious conflict was only averted by the complaisance of Frederick William, who, anxious at all costs to maintain peace, recalled his troops and referred the question at issue to lawyers, though his Majesty's forbearance must have been sorely taxed when the Duke of Berg sent him a letter of remonstrance on Blücher's conduct, beginning with the familiar address, "*Mon frere*"!

Napoleon, who was, for the moment, himself desirous of peace, believing that he might gain by diplomacy acquisitions fully as valuable as those which were to be conquered by the sword,

reprimanded Murat severely for this adventure. Nevertheless, thanks to the skilful policy of Caroline, who represented her husband's interests at the French Court far more efficiently than any accredited ambassador could possibly have done, his anger soon passed, and he continued to overwhelm his brother-in-law with favours, to add to his dominions, and to increase the importance of his position in Germany. When, in the following July, the Confederation of the Rhine was constituted, he caused Murat to enter it, with the title of Grand-Duke and all the rights, honours, and prerogatives attached to the royal dignity, and allotted him a seat in the first college, that of the kings, immediately after the Grand-Duke of Baden and before the Grand-Duke of Hesse-Darmstadt. Moreover, he gave him the monopoly of the posts of North Germany, which for nearly two centuries had been enjoyed by the House of Thurn and Taxis; he compelled the Duke of Nassau and several minor princes to cede to him territory which more than doubled his dominions, and made him sovereign lord over a whole group of "Serenities."

Napoleon, however, had soon cause to regret the elevation of his brother-in-law, as, indeed, in years to come, he had that of most of his satellites. So far from being satisfied with what he had received, the greed and arrogance of the new grand-duke knew no bounds. He quarrelled with the Duke of Nassau; he quarrelled with the King

of Holland; he violated the rights of all his neighbours, and, what was worse, sought to throw the responsibility for his own illegal acts upon the Emperor. Finally, he quarrelled violently with Napoleon himself over the question of Wesel, the key of Northern Germany, which the Emperor had decided to unite to France, "since it could only belong to a great Power." "The Emperor," he exclaimed indignantly, "has no right to take that place away from me; I did not receive it from him; it was a treaty with the King of Prussia that gave it to me." Napoleon, who had made the treaty in question, was of a different opinion, and wrote to Murat that his ingratitude made him blush for him. Altogether, it was well for Murat that the outbreak of war with Prussia came to divert his Majesty's mind to matters of more importance than his brother-in-law's pretensions, and to afford the Grand-Duke opportunities of regaining by his brilliant valour the goodwill of the Emperor, or it might have taxed all Caroline's diplomatic skill to save the situation.

While Murat was gathering fresh laurels in Prussia and Poland, his wife remained in Paris. The absence of Queen Hortense, the age of the Empress, who no longer danced, and Pauline's delicate health, left the field open to her, and she reigned the undisputed queen of society. Napoleon had given orders that the war was not to be allowed to interrupt the usual winter festivi-

ANDOCHE JUNOT, DUC D'ABRANTÈS

FROM A LITHOGRAPH BY DELPECH

ties, and, despite of the departure of the Emperor and the greater part of the military element, despite, too, of the fears which must have oppressed so many hearts, the season was a very gay one. But by far the most brilliant entertainments were those given by Caroline, for whose invitations all fashionable Paris, with the exception of a few irreconcilables of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, eagerly contended. "The Grand Duchess of Berg lived in great splendour at the Elysée. Her beauty was enhanced by the most exquisite toilettes;[1] her pretensions were great; her manners affable when she thought it prudent, and more than affable to men whom she desired to fascinate."[2]

And the person whom she particularly desired to fascinate at this juncture was Junot, who had replaced Murat as Governor of Paris. Junot was then in the very prime of manhood, handsome, tall, well made, brave, chivalrous and open-handed; in a word, a man capable of inspiring a genuine passion, even in a far from susceptible heart. But if we are to believe his wife and Stanislas de Girardin, it was not to his good looks or to his amiable qualities that he was indebted for his conquest of the Emperor's sister, but to a very different reason.

[1] For an account of Caroline's toilettes, which often cost from 12,000 to 15,000 francs, see M. Henri Bouchot's interesting work, *le Luxe sous l'Empire*.

[2] Madame de Rémusat, *Mémoires*.

The constant presence of Napoleon on the battlefield rendered the chance of the throne of France suddenly becoming vacant a far from remote contingency. Cold, calculating, and devoured by an ambition which her recent elevation had only served to stimulate, Caroline had often pondered as to what would happen in such an eventuality. In the ordinary course of events, Joseph Bonaparte would succeed; but Joseph had no influence with the Army, and the same remark applied to Louis and Jérôme; and the Army was likely to prove the dominant factor in the situation. On the other hand, Murat had a great name in the Army, and, though Lannes, Oudinot, Macdonald, Masséna, and several other generals had deserved equally well of their country, the Grand-Duke of Berg, as the Emperor's brother-in-law, came before both soldiers and people under peculiar advantages.

Soon a bold scheme began to take shape in Caroline's ambitious mind. Junot, as Governor of Paris, had under his orders the whole of the troops in garrison in the military district of Paris. If she could assure herself of his whole-hearted co-operation in her plans, it would be comparatively easy, in the event of Napoleon's death in battle, to proclaim Murat as his successor, for Junot was universally popular with and esteemed by his subordinates, and they would obey him without question. As for the other garrisons in France and the armies in the field, they would

doubtless accept the accomplished fact, for it was difficult to imagine that any one could be so foolish as to be ready to shed his blood to secure the throne for Joseph or either of his brothers.

As M. Arthur Lévy points out, the scheme which Caroline elaborated during the Prussian and Polish campaigns of 1806–7 bears a singular resemblance to that which Malet, not only planned, but attempted to put into execution, during the disastrous Russian campaign of 1812. "Their two combinations," he writes, "could only succeed on the condition of not taking into any account the laws of the Empire, when the news of the Emperor's death was received. They differed in this sense, that Malet, in his impatience, supposed one day the news to be true, and acted in consequence; while Caroline waited patiently—at least we are willing to believe it—until the death of her brother should actually take place. In order to be prepared for that eventuality, she told herself, as did the celebrated conspirator, that it was necessary at any cost to have the Governor of Paris at her orders. To attain this end, Malet could only reckon on his impudence; Caroline, finding weapons in her beauty, undertook the easy task of securing the Governor, who was, at this time, General Junot."[1]

The princess accordingly employed all her coquetry to conquer the heart of Junot. "She opened all the balls with the Governor of Paris,

[1] *Napoléon intime.*

played whist with the Governor of Paris, rode on horseback with the Governor of Paris, received the Governor of Paris alone in preference to all other persons, until the poor Governor of Paris, who certainly was not an angel [it is his wife who writes], and whose heart, though always attached to me and his children, was not insensible to the impressions of the moment, could no more resist the perpetual seductions which assailed him than the Christian knights could resist the seductions of the Palace of Armida."[1]

Junot, who had his fair share of vanity, and saw in this *bonne fortune* nothing but the victory of his personal attraction, fell passionately in love with the Grand-Duchess. The amorous general was far from suspecting the machinations which lay behind the complaisance of the princess. Caroline was much too astute to propose to him a compact, even eventual, contrary to the wishes of the Emperor, for the almost fanatical devotion of Junot to his master would have rendered such a proceeding highly dangerous. "But," says the indignant wife, "she said such things as were intended to ensure, whenever the decisive moment should arrive, that he could refuse her nothing."[2]

The intimacy between the Grand-Duchess and the Governor soon became the talk of Paris, nor

[1] Duchess d'Abrantès, *Mémoires*. The duchess adds that Caroline subsequently assured her that she did not return the Governor's affection, and that she is inclined to believe her.

[2] *Ibid.*

was it long before so piquant a piece of gossip reached the army in Poland. Hitherto Napoleon appears to have lived in a sort of fool's paradise in regard to his sisters, for the princesses took care to be exceedingly gracious to the Minister of Police and his Majesty's confidants, Duroc, Savary, and others, and it was not therefore to the interests of these persons to betray them. Joséphine and Hortense had no doubt frequently endeavoured to enlighten him on the subject, but, as he was aware of the hostility which existed between them and his sisters, he was not inclined to attach much importance to evidence from such a quarter. But, unfortunately for Junot, that gallant officer happened to be on bad terms with Savary, in consequence of which the latter, instead of contenting himself with jesting over the affair with other members of the Emperor's staff, felt it to be his painful duty to acquaint his master with what was going on.

The Emperor was exceedingly wrath, but he does not appear to have had any suspicion as to the real motive of Caroline's conduct. Any way, when he returned to Paris after the Peace of Tilsit, he contented himself with reprimanding his sister for what that lady assured him had been nothing but an indiscretion, since, as she pointed out, with admirable *aplomb*, if there had really been anything criminal in her relations with the Governor of Paris, she would not have been so ill-advised to advertise their intimacy to the world.

To Junot, however, who was not in the secret of his Majesty's extra-conjugal adventures, he was more severe. There was a stormy interview at the Tuileries, when the Emperor informed the hapless Governor that he was fully acquainted with everything that had taken place in his absence: "Ah! Ah! You are astonished, M. Junot, that I am so well posted in your affairs, and in those of that little fool, Madame Murat."

Junot, who had not foreseen the consequences of his little romance, was more than astonished; he was overwhelmed. He protested that the affair had been perfectly innocent; nothing but a harmless flirtation. The Emperor accepted the explanation, but told him that he had, nevertheless, done him a grave injury. "Thy liveries ought not to be seen at two o'clock in the morning in the courtyard of the Grand-Duchess of Berg. Thou, Junot! Thou to compromise my sister! Ah!" And, with a gesture of despair, he sank into a chair.

Junot offered to give satisfaction to Murat, if he deemed himself offended. "My hôtel," said he, "is very near the Elysée, and——"

"Yes, yes," replied the Emperor, "much too near."

He forbade him to fight with Murat, whom he and Caroline had already succeeded in pacifying, or with Savary, whom Junot was exceedingly anxious to punish for his meanness, and refused

to allow him to leave the Tuileries until he had promised to keep the peace.

The affair ended by Junot being removed from his post of Governor of Paris and sent, in a sort of disguised disgrace, as Ambassador to Lisbon, "in order," his Majesty remarked, "to put an end to the rumours which are in circulation concerning my sister and thee." The Iberian peninsula became from that time, as we shall presently see, the fashionable place of exile for happy or recalcitrant gallants of the Imperial Princesses.

If Napoleon had succeeded in temporarily appeasing the desires of his sisters, his mother remained extremely dissatisfied with what had been done for her, and grumbled incessantly. As "Protectress of the Sisters of Charity," she was naturally the recipient of numerous applications for assistance from benevolent institutions throughout France; but she declined to open her purse. She sympathised deeply with the objects of her petitioners, and would gladly aid them if it were in her power; but her allowance barely sufficed, even with the most rigid economy and self-denial, for the needs of her Household, and she must therefore advise them to apply to the Grand Almonry. Such was her invariable answer. At the beginning of the year 1806, the Emperor raised her pension of 300,000 francs to 480,000 francs, but she continued to plead poverty, and officials of benevolent societies who presented

themselves at the Hôtel de Brienne continued to go empty away. The elevation of her daughters to be reigning princesses and grand-duchesses naturally did not tend to allay her ill-humour, for, although she had no ambition to have a State to govern, she would have dearly liked to have had one to sell. Her resentment was stimulated by certain members of her entourage, who believed that an improvement in their mistress's position could not fail to redound to their own advantage, and at length she came to the conclusion that she was a very ill-used woman indeed. Accordingly, with the assistance of her secretary Guieu, she drew up and addressed to the Emperor a lengthy epistle, setting forth her grievances "with a frankness inseparable from those intimate communications of the heart to which all personal calculation is necessarily foreign."

After declaring that she had no ambitious pretensions, that the title of Mother of the Emperor was sufficiently glorious for her, and that "her place at his side was as eminent in her eyes as it was precious to her heart," she continues:

> But I ought to live in the Empire with the dignity that is suitable to my rank. It is not so much for my own sake that I desire it as for yours, since your Majesty's mother ought to be honoured by the people as much as you honour and esteem her yourself, and you are aware how much in public opinion outward display adds to that of title, and even to personal qualities.

You have then to examine, Sire, if my allowance is sufficient, in regard to the obligations which my position imposes upon me. A revenue of 480,000 francs is doubtless adequate for my personal needs; it is not so, having regard to the obligations which arise from my political status. To maintain my position adequately large means are required.

I shall be very far from maintaining a suitable position, if my entourage is not at least on a level with that of the other members of the Imperial Family, and if I am obliged to reduce the scale of expenditure which I have hitherto adopted in my Household.

In the first place, I am in need of the necessary funds to provide myself with a supply of plate, linen, and furniture, which I have not been able to procure out of my ordinary revenue. You are aware, Sire, that I have received nothing for the initial expenses of my establishment.[1] Secondly, I require a fixed and settled income proportioned to what a dignified manner of living exacts. Well, to judge what is necessary for me, you have points of comparison which will be sufficient for you to consult. Your noble feelings, moreover, will indicate to you the extent of the magnificence with which you ought to surround the mother of the most powerful monarch in the world.

But it is not only an increase of revenue she desires. The shrewd old lady was well aware that,

[1] If she had received nothing from the Emperor for this specific purpose, she had received *gratifications* during the past year by which her income had been more than doubled.

in the event of Napoleon's death, she might find his successor far less generously disposed, and she therefore proposes to secure herself against such an eventuality :

As to the manner in which my allowance ought to be paid, I invite you to reflect upon certain points.

A simple pension which is only determined by an act not clothed with legal forms offers me a precious proof of your love, but it is not for me a political title, emanating from the sovereign power. I have in your sentiments the surest guarantee of my present lot ; but I declare, Sire, that at no time and in no circumstances do I wish to depend on anything save your will, and your thoughtful affection cannot but desire that it should be so. The provision for a fixed allowance for me appears then to be in conformity with your Majesty's sentiments as well as with my personal dignity.

I do not fear to go further and to confess to you, Sire, that it would be sweet to me to be glorified by a solemn act, which would manifest to the French nation the sentiments which you profess towards me, and which have constituted until now the joy of my private life.

And then she goes on to demand a jointure charged, by a decree of the Senate, "upon certain portions of the public contributions," which would not only render her entirely independent of the bounty of the Emperor and his successors, but would assimilate her position to that of a queen-

mother, and elevate her above all the princes of the Imperial Family; and she concludes:

That, Sire, is all that I can desire. I am happy in my present position, and I do not dissimulate the enchantment which a son such as you are has shed over my life. But when I invite you to render it possible for me to live in a condition of greater magnificence, I am not seeking vain pleasures. You can conceive that my ideas are closely linked with a maternal sentiment which does not separate my glory from your own.

The demands formulated in this flowery epistle, —it was the production, of course, of her secretary Guieu, not of *Madame* herself—which the panegyrical Baron Larrey considers "so well justified" —caused Napoleon much annoyance. It was not that he objected to increasing his mother's pension—for towards his relatives he was ever the most generous of men—but he did most strongly object to her pretension to become, by virtue of an official act, a political person, almost on an equality with the Emperor himself, and altogether independent of his bounty.

And, apart from such considerations, there was another reason, which made Napoleon reluctant to bestow upon his mother dignities which would bring her so much into prominence. With her beautiful features, her graceful carriage, her dignified manners, *Madame* made a most impressive figure. Impassive, cold, silent, she was

admirable. But when she spoke, and, in particular, when she became animated, her deplorable accent, her ignorance of the intricacies of the French language, the Corsican interjections and gestures in which she indulged, made her an object of amusement, and even of ridicule, rather than of veneration. To permit her to occupy a public position in which she would be called upon to open exhibitions, lay foundation-stones, make speeches, and converse freely with all kinds of people, would be, he felt, a most fatal error.

On this point, therefore, he firmly declined to yield, but, to compensate *Madame* for her disappointment, he showed himself very accommodating in other respects. He sent her a quantity of very valuable furniture; he instructed the administrator of the Gobelins to select "an assortment of old and new tapestries for the Château of Pont"; he made her, in the following August, a present of 600,000 francs, and, on January 1, 1808, her pension, which had no doubt been augmented in the meanwhile by other *gratifications*, was raised to 1,000,000 francs.

Madame Mère passed the whole of the summer and part of the autumn of 1806 at the Château of Pont. She led a very quiet life, and the days were passed in a monotonous and dull routine, which the younger members of her Household must have found extremely wearisome. "We rose when we pleased," writes the Duchesse d'Abrantès, "and breakfasted at half-past eleven,

that is to say, noon, when all the residents of the château assembled.... After breakfast, needlework was introduced, and sometimes, when the weather happened to be very hot, *Madame* played at cards. Then, we dispersed to our apartments or went to pay visits; next, came the toilette and dinner, and afterwards, in the long summer evenings, a ride in open carriages along the banks of the Seine, or through the woods towards le Paraclet.

The arrival of Cardinal Fesch, bringing with him that strange creature, the Italian poet Gianni,[1] proved a welcome relief to the monotonous existence led by the little Court, and, during their stay, Pont seems to have been almost gay. On one occasion, Gianni, inspired by the memory of Abélard and Héloïse, proposed an excursion to le Paraclet, and suggested that the journey should be made on donkeys. His proposal was accepted with enthusiasm; and, on the appointed day, a score of these animals in all stages of decrepitude were assembled in the courtyard of the château. *Madame Mère* naturally preferred a carriage, but nearly all her Household decided to ride, and the *cortège* started amidst shouts of merriment. The sight of the little deformed poet, with his hump and his immense paunch, perched

[1] Madame d'Abrantès describes him as about four feet in height, humpbacked and enormously stout, with "arms that enabled him to tie his shoes without stooping, and a countenance which matched the deformity of his figure."

upon an ass, presented a truly comical spectacle; but he had had the good fortune to select an exceptionally docile mount, and emerged triumphant from the ordeal. Madame Junot's mount, on the other hand, opposed a most desperate resistance to all attempts to induce him to proceed, and eventually deposited the fair Laure on her back in the dusty road, where she lay half-stunned; while Gianni, instead of going to her assistance, shouted to her:

> Laura, d'un asino in giù caddè.
> Perchè por gli asini LAURO non è.

In October, *Madame Mère* returned to Paris, whence the Emperor had already started for the Prussian campaign, and occupied herself with superintending various improvements which were being carried out at the Hôtel de Brienne, and with the investment of her steadily-increasing savings, in which matter she invariably displayed a quite astonishing perspicacity. Occasionally, she went to the Opera or to one of the other theatres, at each of which the Imperial box had been placed at her disposal, but, as a rule, she preferred to spend her evenings in the dimly-lit salon of the Hôtel de Brienne, playing *réversi* with her brother, the Brissacs, and other intimate friends.

As was always the case when Napoleon was with the army in the field, she suffered the most intense anxiety on his account, though, as usual, she was careful not to permit those about her to

suspect her condition of mind, and even in her letters to different members of her family at this period, the terrible drama which was being enacted in Prussia and Poland is scarcely mentioned. "All men considered me the happiest mother in the world," she observed, many years later, "while my life was one uninterrupted sorrow and martyrdom. I feared that every courier that arrived would bring me the terrible tidings that the Emperor had died on the field of battle."[1]

It was Napoleon's custom, when in Paris, to invite all the members of the Imperial Family to dine with him every Sunday at the Tuileries. These family gatherings had, of course, been interrupted by the departure of the Emperor and Joséphine for Germany; but when, in the spring of 1807, the latter returned to the capital, they were resumed. *Madame Mère*, who could not endure the thought of seeing her detested daughter-in-law occupying the post which she considered to be rightfully hers—in her opinion, it was the Hôtel de Brienne, and not the Tuileries, which ought to become, in the Emperor's absence, the weekly rendezvous of the family—determined to escape this humiliation by removing to Pont, excused herself from assisting at the first of these dinners, and wrote to Napoleon to ask his permission to leave Paris.

His Majesty, however, whose military occupations did not prevent him from keeping a watch-

[1] Published by Baron Larrey, *Madame Mère*.

ful eye on the conduct of his relatives, and sternly checking any attempt at insubordination on their part, sent his mother a very sharp reminder of the obedience which he expected from her :

Finckenstein
18 April, 1807

Madame,—I quite approve of you going to your country estate ; but, so long as you remain in Paris, it is essential that you should dine every Sunday in the Empress's apartments, where the family dinner is held. My family is a political family. When I am absent, the Empress is always the head of it; besides, it is an honour that I am conferring upon the members of my family. That does not prevent me, when I happen to be in Paris, and my occupations permit of it, from dining with you.

Your affectionate son,
Napoléon[1]

This epistle must have occasioned *Madame* a good deal of mortification, but the departure of Joséphine for Malmaison and Saint-Cloud, and afterwards for The Hague, in order to console her daughter, who had just lost her eldest son, Napoleon Charles, dispensed her from the obligation of choosing between submission to Napoleon's commands and retiring to Pont ; and she passed the summer in Paris.

On the return of the Emperor to his capital, she assisted at the *Te Deum* at Notre Dame in celebration of his victories and the Peace

[1] Published by Baron Larrey, *Madame Mère*.

Louis Napoleon *Princess Élisa* *Empress Joséphine* *Napoleon* *Mme. Mère* *Jerome* *Princess Cath. of Würtemberg* *Princess Pauline* *Murat* *Princess Caroline*

THE MARRIAGE OF JÉRÔME BONAPARTE AND THE PRINCESS CATHERINE OF WÜRTEMBERG (AUGUST 22, 1807

FROM AN ENGRAVING AFTER THE PAINTING BY REGNAULT (BRITISH MUSEUM)

of Tilsit (August 15), and the fêtes which followed, on which occasion joy, pride, and a very elegant toilette made her appear so youthful, that strangers could hardly be persuaded to believe she was really the Emperor's mother. A few days later, she was present at the marriage of Jérôme—whose union with Elizabeth Patterson had been annulled in the previous October—and Catherine of Würtemberg. Towards this amiable and excellent princess *Madame Mère* found herself strongly drawn at their very first interview, and a warm friendship was soon established between them, which endured without interruption until Catherine's death, in November 1835, only a few weeks before her own.

Although, as we have mentioned, but little of her Imperial Highness's income found its way into the coffers of benevolent institutions, she took her title of "Protectress of the Sisters of Charity" very seriously, and would appear to have rendered good service by the introduction of more business-like methods into the management of their affairs. At the end of September 1807, the Emperor, at her request, gave to the sisters the Couvent des Dames de la Croix, in the Rue Charonne, to be the headquarters of their institution, and, at the same time, directed that the forthcoming Chapter-General should be held at *Madame Mère's* hôtel and under her presidency. The report which she addressed on this occasion to his Majesty was published in the

Moniteur and all the journals, with the following acknowledgment from the Emperor:

"I am unable, Madame, to express to you my satisfaction at the zeal which you are showing and the fresh cares which you are taking upon yourself. They cannot add anything to the sentiments of veneration and filial love which I entertain for you."

Early in October, *Madame Mère* joined the Court at Fontainebleau, where the Emperor gave practical expression to his "sentiments of veneration and filial love" by a promise that, at the beginning of the following year, her pension should be raised to 1,000,000 francs.

Ever since her return to France, at the end of 1804, *Madame* had maintained an active correspondence with the exiled Lucien, and it was owing to her influence that, in December 1807, an interview was arranged between the latter and the Emperor at Mantua. Napoleon used every possible persuasion to induce his brother to repudiate "the widow Jouberthou": he would admit the legality of the marriage; he would recognise as members of the Imperial Family Lucien's daughters by his first marriage—Charlotte and Christine—and those of the second—Lætitia and Jeanne—who had been born since its celebration, though the son born in 1803 must be excluded; handsome compensation, however, should be given the boy and his mother; Lucien

should be included in the line of succession to the throne, with all the rights conferred upon his brothers: he should receive a kingdom—that of Portugal, for example—and, even, if he wished, might continue to live with his divorced wife, provided he did not bring her to France or allow her to participate in the honours of royalty.

Nothing, however, came of this interview, from which such great things had been expected, and though *Madame* wrote letter after letter to Lucien, imploring him to make the sacrifice which the Emperor demanded, he remained obdurate. He would not divorce his wife; he would not separate his children.

To obtain the augmentation of her pension, *Madame* had alleged the necessity of living in a style more suited to her position as the Emperor's mother, of increasing the number of her Household, and of entertaining on a more liberal scale. But when her request had been acceded to, she made very little change in her mode of life. She did not make any fresh appointments in her Household, save in the case of death or resignation; she did not even increase the salaries of her officers, which must have been a sad disappointment to those aspiring ladies and gentlemen who had prompted the demands she had addressed to the Emperor, in the belief that the improvement in her Highness's financial position would be followed by a corresponding one in their own; and, though she certainly ordered a splendid silver-gilt dinner

service from the jeweller Odiot, she did not give more dinner parties. Nor do the benevolent institutions of which she was the patroness appear to have reaped any appreciable benefit, though Baron Larrey maintains that she was very charitable in an unostentatious way. The Emperor remonstrated, but it was to no purpose. "You do not know how to enjoy life, Signora Letizia," said he; "I have given you an income of a million francs; but you live like a *bourgeoise* of Saint-Denis. You must not hoard your money, but spend all that I give you." "Then you must let me have two million, instead of one," she replied, "for I *must* economise; it is my nature." And, so far from being satisfied with her allowance, of which she saved at least half, she was continually applying to him to have it increased.

But it was not avarice which prompted her to economise in this fashion, for she responded generously to any appeal for assistance from her sons, and Lucien, who was occasionally hard put to maintain his position, received from his mother very large sums. It was the fear, almost amounting to a conviction, which, as we have observed elsewhere, continually haunted her, and which seemed to become only the stronger with each fresh triumph Napoleon gained, that one day the sun would cease to shine, that sooner or later the conqueror would abuse his power, and that the colossal Imperial fabric which he had so rapidly built up would come tumbling about his ears like

a house of cards. "Who knows," she observed, on one occasion, when one of her sons represented to her that there was no necessity for the economy which she practised, "who knows whether all these kings will not some day come and beg their bread of me?"

CHAPTER XXI

Élisa at Lucca—Her Court—Her palace—Energy and ability with which she governs her principality—Her Civil List—Her commercial enterprises—She forms a company to work the marble quarries of Carrara : success of this undertaking—Her patronage of literature and the arts—She gives birth to a daughter—Her country seat at Marlia—Her affairs of the heart : Lespérut and Bartolomeo Cenami—Her skilful attitude towards the Emperor gains her his confidence and favour—She obtains a considerable increase of territory—Astuteness she displays in order to persuade Napoleon to extend the Concordat of Italy to Lucca, and enable her to confiscate the revenues of the religious houses—Resentment which this measure arouses among her subjects.

IN the meanwhile, Élisa, at Lucca, was experiencing all the pleasure of sovereignty with apparently few of its drawbacks. The town was charming, the climate delightful, her subjects orderly and contented, while her complaisant consort was perfectly content to reign without showing the slightest desire to govern. She had a Court modelled on that of the Tuileries, and almost as numerous : *Dame d'honneur*, *Chevalier d'honneur*, First Chamberlain, First Equerry, First Almoner, Grand Master, Intendant-General, Prefect of the Palace, Master of the Ceremonies, twelve ladies-in-waiting, twelve chamberlains, twelve equerries, and six pages all covered with silver embroidery. Madame de la Place, who

had followed her from France, continued her duties as *Dame d'honneur*, but only for a few months, when she returned to France to represent the princess with the modistes and milliners of the capital—a post which was no sinecure, as her letters to her patroness prove.[1] The Marchese Girolamo Lucchesini, head of one of the principal families of Lucca, who, after having been many years in the service of Prussia, had lately returned to his native land, accepted the post of First Chamberlain, and another Luccan, Bartolomeo Cenami, of whom more anon, was her First Equerry.

These officials, whose duties were regulated by a most elaborate code of etiquette, containing no less than two hundred and fifty-three articles, were supported by a small army of gorgeous menials: comptroller and sub-comptroller, two *maitres d'hôtel*, seven *valets-de-chambre*, eight footmen, as many waiting-women, and so forth, in all, more than fifty persons. The Prince, when called on to sign orders upon the Treasury for the payment of all these functionaries and domestics, ventured to suggest that some reduction in their number might be advisable. But his imperious consort would listen to no remonstrance, and, though she did eventually curtail her expenditure in this direction, it was by lowering salaries, not by suppressing offices. However,

[1] *Lettres de Madame de la Place à Élisa, Princesse de Lucques et Piombino*, edited by M. Paul Marmottan, Paris, 1897.

her Household—we say *her*, since it was to Élisa, and not to Félix, that all the officials looked for their instructions, and the latter had no one directly under his orders, except his aides-de-camp and his *valet-de-chambre*—was maintained at much less cost than might have been supposed; many of the Court officials were members of noble Luccan families, who were content with the dignity which their posts conferred upon them and received merely nominal salaries, while the servants appear to have been very badly paid. Thus, some of the lackeys only received between 300 or 400 francs a year, out of which they found their own food.

A palace, however, was needed to house in a suitable manner their most Serene and Imperial Highnesses and their entourage, and this presented some little difficulty. There were a number of palaces in Lucca, several of them very imposing residences indeed, such as the Palazzo Cenami, a splendid example of Renaissance architecture, and the Palazzo Mansi, famous for its tapestries and gallery of Flemish masters. But either their owners declined to part with them, or they were too small for Élisa's requirements. Temporarily, the Court was lodged at the Palazzo Bovisi, the owner of which, the Marchese Bovisi, had been accustomed to drive about in a magnificent carriage preceded by outriders and running footmen; but, having lately nearly ruined himself by his extravagance, pre-

THE GALLERY OF THE PALACE OF LUCCA IN 1808

FROM A CONTEMPORARY PRINT IN THE POSSESSION OF M. PAUL MARMOTTAN

ferred to surrender the home of his fathers and to retire to his estates than appear before his new sovereign in an equipage unworthy of his dignity. But a princess could not be expected to remain permanently in what had been the residence of a mere marquis—the idea was preposterous! And so Élisa summoned the architect Bienaimé from Paris, and soon there arose a splendid palace, with a marble staircase and a vast vaulted gallery of white marble and white stucco, in the centre of which was a beautiful cupola decorated with friezes and consoles in stucco, and which was enriched by masterpieces of modern sculpture, notably, by several examples of Canova's work, a magnificent Throne-Room for solemn audiences, a Council-Chamber for the deliberations of the Ministers, and spacious reception-rooms, in which might be seen chimney-pieces of marble or porphyry, doors of massive cedar, silk curtains with reliefs designed in velvet, furniture by Jacob, bas-reliefs by Thorwaldsen, timepieces by Leroy, and examples of the goldsmith's art by Biennais.[1]

And, since this splendid abode was hemmed in by neighbouring buildings, which obstructed the view from its windows, and did not permit those who approached it to form a just conception of its magnificence, Élisa caused an old tower which

[1] For a full account of the Palace of Lucca, see M. Marmottan's exhaustive and finely-illustrated work, *les Arts en Toscane sous Napoléon; la princesse Élisa.*

served as a prison, a church, the palace of the archives, and several houses to be demolished; and, in the midst of the open space secured at such a cost, and which received the name of the Piazza Napoleone, erected a monument intended to perpetuate the achievements of her all-conquering brother.[1]

Many of the Luccan nobility had at first been inclined to regard the new *régime* with some disfavour, but when they saw that a brilliant era was beginning, in which their appetite for gaiety and pleasure would find full satisfaction, they speedily abandoned their hostility, and the Court officials were besieged with applications from persons who desired the honour of being presented to their Highnesses. Élisa, who understood the pleasure-loving Italian temperament—was she not of Italian descent herself?—entertained on a lavish scale, and State dinners, balls, receptions, and concerts succeeded one another in rapid succession. "The Court of Lucca," wrote the French envoy, the Comte Eschas-

[1] "On the four faces of the base, one might have seen the four rivers: the Nile, the Po, the Danube, and the Vistula, witnesses of his triumphs, and four bas-reliefs representing the victories of Aboukir, Marengo, Austerlitz, and Jena. Above, was a globe, on which was sculptured the exploits of Themistocles, Alexander, Hannibal, Scipio Africanus, Cæsar, Clovis, Charlemagne, William the Conqueror, Gustavus Adolphus, Prince Eugène, and Frederick the Great (no one was missing but the kings of France: François I, Henry IV or Louis XIV, who, however, . . !). The statue of the Emperor dominated the whole."—M. E. Rodocanachi, *Élisa Napoléon en Italie.*

sériaux, "is on a small scale what that of Saint-Cloud is on a large. I have even found it more brilliant, save in point of numbers, both in costume and ceremony."

This little city, which had slumbered for centuries behind its thick ramparts, became, on a sudden, a brilliant capital, full of life and movement. The aristocracy and the wealthy merchants vied with one another in luxury and extravagance; visitors from all parts of Italy and distinguished foreigners crowded the inns; two theatres were opened, one for Italian ballets, the other for French plays; a casino, in which a variety of amusements were provided, and a splendid bathing establishment were built; and the Palazzo Santini was converted into a fashionable gambling-hell, where, in consideration of a huge subsidy to the State, faro and roulette were permitted until the small hours of the morning.

In accordance with the Constitution of June 24th, 1805, the Prince of Lucca and Piombino was assisted in the government of his dominions by two Ministers, one of whom controlled the departments of Justice, the Interior, Foreign Affairs, and Education, while the other was responsible for those of Finance, Public Worship, Police, and War; a Council of State of six members, and a Senate of thirty-six senators. But Félix's share in the administration seems to have been confined to signing decrees placed

before him by his consort; the Council of State seldom met, and, when it did, transacted nothing of importance; while Élisa took care that the sittings of the Senate should be rather occasions for the display of pomp and ceremony than for the discussion of the affairs of the nation, and if by chance that body ventured to take a decision contrary to her will, she instructed her docile husband to send "a remonstrance paternal but severe," which never failed to recall it to obedience.

For it was Élisa who governed, and it must be admitted with energy and ability. She worked with the Ministers; she caused almost every detail of the administration to be submitted for her approval; she reviewed her little army, mounted on horseback; she corresponded incessantly with the Emperor and with the Ministers in Paris, and, in short, might have exclaimed, without fear of contradiction: "*l'État, c'est moi!*" The *précieuse* of the Paris salons had become a political woman, and one who did not hesitate to put her ideas of government into practice.

"The habit of work has become a passion with me," she writes to Napoleon; "it takes the place of every other idea, and when I return to my cabinet, I remain there with as much pleasure as at the most brilliant fête. You see, Sire, how your lessons and your paternal counsels can change all ideas and all sentiments."[1]

[1] Letter of March 6, 1806, Archives Nationales, published by M. Rodocanachi.

The results of her activity and enterprise were to be seen in every direction; roads were made: one to Viareggio, another to Florence, a third to Pisa; the draining of the marshes was begun, though lack of funds prevented the undertaking from being completed; the silk industry was introduced, and awards made to the most skilful workmen; the tribunals, in which justice was still administered with all the tortuous and costly procedure of the middle ages, were reconstituted; vexatious taxes were abolished; benevolent institutions, which were very numerous in Lucca, as in all the towns of Italy, were placed under proper supervision; the police were reorganised and political *espionnage* suppressed; the prisons—hotbeds of iniquity and disease—were reformed, and those confined in them compelled to work; and, since the Luccans were rather refractory in the matter of inoculation, premiums were paid to the doctors who vaccinated the greatest number of persons.[1]

Nor, while occupying herself with the welfare of her subjects, did the Princess, who possessed, like all her family, excellent business capabilities, neglect her own interests. The Civil List of the Principalities of Lucca and Piombino, as fixed by the Constitution of June 24, 1805, consisted of an annual sum of 300,000 francs, paid by the Treasury in money of the country, and a further 100,000 from the Crown Lands. Such were the

[1] M. E. Rodocanachi, *Élisa Napoléon en Italie.*

official figures, but, in point of fact, the revenues of the sovereign were considerably higher. Élisa continued to draw, until the end of the year 1809, a pension of 240,000 francs from the Grande Cassette, and to this must be added a portion of the Customs of the two principalities. It would therefore appear that the Civil List of the Princess was not far short of 800,000 francs.

Nevertheless, her Highness found such an income very inadequate to maintain the grandeur which she considered to be indispensable to her exalted position, and she accordingly sought to augment it by every means which promised a fair return. She imported moufflon from Corsica and sold them to her subjects; she acquired an alum mine at Piombino; she re-established the sole right of the sovereign to net the tunny, which abounded in the canal of Lucca; she had forges at Piombino, and, to supply them with ore, successfully revived an old claim of the sovereigns of Piombino to a certain proportion of the output of the mines of Elba, though, as the mines now belonged to a company, Napoleon at first refused to authorise what was nothing but an act of spoliation. But her most successful commercial enterprise was the establishment of a company to work the long-abandoned marble quarries of Carrara.

Thanks to the shrewdness of Élisa, this undertaking quickly yielded the most gratifying results.

She had the ingenious idea of employing the first blocks which were extracted in fashioning busts of the Emperor after a plaster cast made by Canova, which the French Ambassador at the Etrurian Court had sent her. All the grand officers of the Crown, Duroc, Talleyrand, Clarke, Regnaud de Saint-Jean-d'Angély, the directors of the Customs, and other important functionaries received copies, and soon orders came pouring in from all parts of France. Encouraged by this success, Élisa sent to Paris and elsewhere to obtain other models, and Bartolini,[1] who had the direction of these works, was incessantly occupied in fashioning the image of some member of the Imperial Family. The demand continued to increase, and Carrara became a veritable manufactory. "I have converted my quarries of Carrara into *ateliers* of sculpture," wrote the Princess to the Emperor, "and the models of Chaudet and Canova multiply under my eyes, to be transmitted to the kings whom your Majesty has made, and to the nations which owe to you their happiness. These monuments of gratitude, erected to immortal genius, will be the first thought of my heart."

[1] Lorenzo Bartolini, born at Savignano, near Prato, about 1777, died at Florence in 1850. He studied in Paris under Lemot and Desmarets. The best-known examples of his work are the bas-reliefs representing the Battle of Austerlitz on the Vendôme Column, the statue of "Élisa on the throne of Lucca," and the colossal statue of Napoleon in his Coronation robes (a sort of replica in marble of Gerard's famous painting), which adorns the Cours Saint-Nicolas at Bastia.

When the vogue of busts of the Bonaparte family began to show signs of declining, Élisa engineered a "boom" in marshals and other dignitaries of the Empire, and when that, in turn, had run its course, the company devoted itself to fabricating "objects of utility at a low price": tables, vases, chimney-pieces, tombs, clocks, candelabra, etc. In order to justify, in some degree, however, the proud boast which she had made, in a letter to Talleyrand, that the manufactory of Carrara was "an institution founded for the glory of the Emperor and the gratitude of his people," Élisa did not permit work more worthy of the name of sculpture to be neglected, and it was she who commissioned Canova to make, out of a block which she sent him, that magnificent statue of Napoleon which, after the Emperor's fall, became the property of his conqueror Wellington. Moreover the school which she founded in connection with the manufactory fairly established its claim to be considered the first in Europe, and from 1808 to 1830 the majority of the prizes offered by the different academies of Italy were carried off by its pupils; while its influence made itself felt up to a much later date.[1]

Élisa would not have been herself if she had not desired to patronise literature and the arts. For more than a century there had existed at

[1] M. Paul Marmottan, *les arts en Toscane sous Napoléon: la Princesse Élisa.*

Lucca an "Accademia degli Oscuri," which had achieved some celebrity. By a decree, bearing date August 15, 1805, Élisa reorganised it, bestowed upon it the name of the "Accademia Napoleone," established prizes and competitions, and undertook, at her own expense, the publication of its memoirs relating to the history of the town. The number of its members was at first limited to forty, in imitation of its Parisian prototype, though, subsequently, in order to add lustre to the institution, the Princess decided to augment it by the election of several French savants who had frequented her salon in Paris. The majority of the new academicians received with their diplomas a medal, engraved by Santarelli, bearing on the face effigies of the Prince and Princess, and on the reverse the legend, "*Dignioribus murandis.*" She also founded a school for the education of the pages of her Household, who were not only ignorant of French, but, according to Sismondi, who visited Lucca about this time, could not even write or speak their own language, and an institution for young girls of noble birth under French mistresses, the regulations for the government of which seem to have been modelled on those of Saint-Cyr, where the Princess herself had been educated. She had her own troupe of musicians, and nominated the celebrated Paganini "virtuoso of the Chamber"; she patronised the composers Spontini and Paisielli, to the latter of whom she presented a gold medal for his opera *Proserpine;*

and she reorganised the École des Beaux-Arts of Lucca, and persuaded the painter Tofanelli to leave Rome and undertake its direction.

On June 3, 1806, Élisa gave birth to a daughter, at the Castle of Marlia, the summer residence of their Highnesses. The Princess was keenly disappointed that the child was not a boy, since the succession to Piombino was vested in her male descendants; but to correct this misfortune, to some extent, and, at the same time, to flatter her brother, she chose for her daughter the masculine name of Napoléone. The Emperor granted his little niece a pension of 150,000 francs, but with the reservation that only 30,000 francs of this sum were to be expended on her maintenance; the balance was to accumulate to form a dowry for her.

The Prince and Princess usually passed the late autumn and winter at Lucca; the rest of the year was spent at Marlia, with occasional visits to Viareggio, the only port which the principality possessed, for a breath of sea air, or to Piombino. Piombino was a dull little town, so dull, indeed, that the salary of its governor had to be materially increased, in order to induce him to remain. Élisa, in consequence, resided there for but brief periods, and what was known as the palace was merely an ordinary house, such as any well-to-do citizen might have inhabited. On the other hand, she spent large sums on the rebuilding and enlargement of Marlia, which, under the superin-

tendence of Bienaimé, his Luccan assistant Lazzarini, and Maurel, the Le Nôtre of the Empire, was transformed from an ugly, dilapidated castle, standing in a little park ornamented with clipped yew-trees and grotesque statuary, into a splendid country-house, with terraced walks, and French and English gardens; while the park was subsequently trebled in extent, by the purchase of adjoining estates, thickly planted with trees and shrubs, and stocked with deer, merino-sheep, and other animals.

In the midst of the cares of State, in the midst of her commercial enterprises, Élisa contrived to find time for gallantry. Her first favourite was Lespérut, formerly secretary to Berthier, whom her husband had brought with him to Italy, to be the guide, philosopher and friend of the new sovereigns. If Lespérut added a new rôle to those for which the Prince had intended him, it must be admitted that he did not neglect the others ; he assisted Élisa to organise the Government, drafted decrees and despatches, and gave her much useful advice on financial matters. Moreover, he cost nothing—or next to nothing—which was a consideration to a princess whose Civil List scarcely permitted of such luxuries as needy lovers. However, Lespérut's reign only lasted some eighteen months, at the end of which he was recalled by the Emperor and sent to Silesia, as administrator of that province. He does not appear to have been as grateful as he

should have been for the favours which he had enjoyed, since "he recounted, with a naïve good-nature, the extravagances of his princess, the manner in which she parodied the Emperor in the government of a territory of a few square leagues, her assumption of the airs of a Semiramis, her political pretensions, and her study of Machiavelli."[1]

Lespérut was succeeded in the Princess's affections by one of her equerries, Bartolomeo Cenami, already mentioned, who seems to have been a sort of Italian counterpart of Pauline's fascinating chamberlain M. de Forbin, with a handsome face, "the physique of a tenor," charming manners, and a pretty turn for flattery. Élisa found him quite irresistible, and his promotion was rapid. From Equerry he became First Equerry, then Grand Equerry and Director-General of Public Instruction; she obtained for him, from the Emperor, the Golden Eagle of the Legion of Honour; and he received a pension of 40,000 francs and a fat slice out of the confiscated revenues of the religious houses. Soon he was one of the richest men in Lucca. Beyond money and decorations the favourite did not aspire, and, although the Princess employed him in several secret negotiations and confidential missions, she kept him, as she kept her husband, in an altogether subordinate position. Élisa desired no coadjutor in the government of Lucca.

[1] Baron de Barante, *Souvenirs*.

Hitherto, as we have observed elsewhere, Élisa had been by no means a favourite of the Emperor, nor would she appear to have been at any special pains to ingratiate herself with him. But, once seated on the throne of Lucca, she adopted a very different course and spared no efforts to secure her brother's favour. Not even in the Empire itself was Napoleon's birthday celebrated with such pomp and splendour as at Lucca; no Court in Europe was more anxious to possess portraits and statues of the Emperor; no one was more anxious to execute, and even to anticipate, the least wishes of his Majesty than his eldest sister. She even carried her flattery to the length of proposing to inscribe on the edge of her coins, "*Napoleone protegge l'Italia*," and thus to substitute her brother for God himself; but the Emperor had the good taste to veto the proposal, stigmatising it as "unseemly."

And before every step she took, before every reform she instituted, whether it was the draining of a marsh, the making of a road, the removal of a tax, or a reform in the Judicature, she never failed to consult her brother, writing to him brief, dry, business-like letters—for Napoleon hated useless verbiage—and "recommending herself to the powerful protection of his Majesty."

Nor, while flattering Napoleon, did she neglect to ingratiate herself with the Ministers, the Senators, the Councillors of State, the members of the Institute, with all who might be of service

to her, who might speak a word in season on her behalf to his Majesty. She had no money, or titles, or decorations to bestow, but she had busts from Carrara—what more gratifying to one's vanity than to receive a present of an idealised portrait of oneself in marble from the Emperor's sister?—diplomas from the "Accademia Napoleone," honeyed compliments, ingenious flatteries. She corresponded with Regnaud, with Cuvier, with La Place, with Talleyrand, with Fouché, complimenting them on their successes, soliciting their advice, commending herself to their good offices. She made friends and allies everywhere.

Gradually, Napoleon's opinion of his eldest sister began to undergo a change. If he had little affection for her, if he were still occasionally inclined to ridicule her pretensions to statesmanship, as he had, in former days, her pretensions to knowledge, he recognised that her abilities were far from contemptible. He appreciated the unwearying industry, the real enthusiasm, which she brought to the difficult task of governing, the clearness and precision in which she expressed herself in her despatches, the moderation of her demands, and the sound, or, at any rate, the plausible, reasons by which they were supported; while he could not fail to be gratified by the deference which she showed to his wishes and her apparent anxiety to profit by his counsels. Finally, he came to the conclusion that Élisa was,

if not more capable, certainly more trustworthy, than any of the sovereigns whom he had created, and treated her accordingly. He was heard to declare that "the best of his Ministers was the Princess of Lucca"; he wrote to her as he wrote to the men who occupied the foremost place in his confidence; he granted her the most of her requests, and in the case of those which he refused, he even condescended to give the motives of his refusal. On one occasion, we find Élisa writing to the Emperor: "Legion of Honour. I have requested of your Majesty to place at my disposal six decorations of the Legion of Honour or of the Iron Crown for my Ministers and my grand officers. The awards and honours accorded to merit are the most powerful means of encouragement. I attach great importance to this proof of your Majesty's confidence." The Emperor replies in the margin of the despatch: "Send me the names of the persons for whom you intend them, and I will nominate them." Whereupon, the Princess, encouraged by her brother's complaisance, furnishes the names, not of six, but of ten candidates, and, what is more, obtains the coveted Golden Eagle of the Legion for every one of them. "Ten Golden Eagles! More than all the Napoleonic kings together obtained for their subjects of Naples, Berg, Holland, Westphalia, and Spain!"[1]

Élisa, thanks to the skilful policy which she

[1] M. Frédéric Masson, *Napoléon et sa famille.*

pursued with her brother, secured far more important advantages than decorations for her Ministers and courtiers.

By a decree of March 30, 1806, the Emperor united to her dominions the districts of Massa and Carrara, and the Garfagnana up to the source of the Serchio, a country comprising 50,000 inhabitants and singularly rich in commerce and agriculture. A few weeks later, on his sister's representation that the province of Pietra-Santa and Barga, belonging to Etruria, which separated her new territory from that of Lucca, once belonged to the latter State, from which, some three centuries before, Tuscany had wrongfully wrested it, and that its inhabitants carried on an extensive contraband trade with her own subjects, he compelled the Queen-Regent of Etruria to cede it to Élisa, in return for the payment of an annual indemnity. Finally, she succeeded in persuading him to extend the Concordat of Italy to her principality, which involved the suppression of all the religious houses in Lucca and Piombino and the confiscation of their revenues, estimated at over 1,000,000 francs, to the profit of the State.

Élisa displayed considerable astuteness in the means she employed to obtain this last decree from the Emperor. Napoleon was naturally reluctant to consent to an act which was not only a flagrant violation of the Constitution he had given to Lucca, and which his sister—or rather her hus-

band—had solemnly sworn to observe, but could not fail to alienate a people whose devotion to the Catholic Faith was notorious throughout Italy. "This is not the time to make any innovation. Do not irritate your people," he wrote. "What would you gain by suppressing four or five parishes and a few convents?" Élisa, however, considered that she stood to gain a good deal, and returned again and again to the charge: "All the property belongs to the clergy; they are rich, the State is poor, involved in debt. The religious authority is independent of the civil power, and ought to be subordinated to it. . . . Half the year is consecrated to festivals, and this idle habit is the source of evils, both moral and political"; and so forth.

At length, she obtained his consent to take "some preparatory measures for the reduction of the convents and the number of their inmates." The Pope, as she had doubtless anticipated, immediately interfered and sent a brief to the Archbishop of Lucca, ordering him to offer the most strenuous resistance. Élisa eagerly seized the opportunity to represent to the Emperor that "these apostolic remonstrances partake of the character of incendiary provocations to the superstition of peoples against the authority of legitimate sovereigns," and that "it was for his Majesty to decide whether the Pontiff of Rome might offer opposition to the sovereign decrees of the chief of the French Empire."

Napoleon naturally decided in the negative, promised to march French troops into Lucca, if there were the slightest disorder, and sent Élisa the draft of a letter to the Pope, in which she was to inform his Holiness that she had done nothing save by the orders of the Emperor, "her august brother and sovereign," to whom she remitted all the negotiations.

In the result, Élisa obtained all that she desired, and, moreover, succeeded in throwing the chief responsibility for a measure which aroused the most intense resentment among her subjects upon the Emperor's shoulders. Nevertheless, it was impossible for her to escape a certain amount of odium, and, if the people continued to erect triumphal arches and illuminate their houses on their sovereigns' birthdays and similar occasions, it was no longer with the same sincerity as before. A certain disaffection began to manifest itself, and this served to strengthen the conviction that Élisa had long entertained that her talents were being wasted in a principality of the second rank, and that they ought to be exercised on a stage more worthy of them.

CHAPTER XXII

Pauline during the winter of 1806–1807—Her toilettes—Her departure for the South—Suspicions of *Madame Mère* and Fesch in regard to her conduct—Pauline at Gréolux—Her letter to Forbin, who joins her there—She goes to Nice, and thence to Grasse—Termination of her romance with Forbin—She returns to Nice—Arrival of the Italian composer Blangini, who assumes the vacant place in her affections—Her visit to Antibes—Borghese is appointed Governor-General of the Departments beyond the Alps, and Pauline receives orders from the Emperor to accompany him to Turin—Household and revenues of the Prince and Princess Borghese—Their journey to Turin—Fête at the Opera-House—Dissatisfaction of Pauline with her new life—Defection of Blangini—Pauline counterfeits illness—She goes to Aix-les-Bains, where she is joined by her mother, alarmed by the reports of her condition—She obtains permission to come to Paris—Her skilful conduct towards the Emperor—Her reward.

PAULINE passed the autumn of 1806 and the following winter in Paris. Although she talked a great deal about her health, and made it a pretext for absenting herself from those social functions which she did not wish to attend—she had not the same powerful motive as Caroline for courting popularity—there does not appear to have been much amiss with her Imperial Highness, as we hear of her giving several magnificent receptions at the Hôtel Charost, and dancing until the small hours of the morning at the balls of the Arch-Chancellor Cambacérès,

which were one of the features of that winter. Never since her return from St. Domingo had she seemed more charming—for her passion for the fascinating Forbin was still at a very high temperature, and is not love the most potent of all aids to beauty? Never had her toilettes excited such admiration and envy. She had a gown of white satin embroidered with gold, of which the embroidery alone cost 1,080 francs; another of *point d'Alençon*, for which she paid 6,000 francs; a third of rose satin embroidered with pearls. In the course of that season, one famous *couturière* alone executed for her no less than forty confections. And then her hats, her toques, her shoes, her gloves, her shawls, her handkerchiefs, her *lingerie*—all were the most elegant, the most costly, that art could devise and money procure. In a single month, her account at one fashionable establishment reached the sum of 14,348 francs 15 sous! In good truth, she deserved the title which Napoleon bestowed upon her of "*la reine des colifichets!*"

In the spring, she wrote to the Emperor to demand permission to go to some watering-place in Provence, giving as her reason that she was contemplating extensive alterations at the Hôtel Charost, which would render it uninhabitable for some weeks. His Majesty, however, seems to have thought the pretext a somewhat singular one; and it was not until his sister had assured him that the whole Faculty of Paris was unanimous in

its opinion that her health—nay, her very life—depended on a season at the waters, that he consented.

Pauline was really ill at the time, suffering from "an hysterical affection," the causes of which are set forth at considerable length, and with great candour, in a letter from the celebrated doctor, Hallé, to the princess's physician-in-ordinary, Peyre, who had called him into consultation.[1] But it would appear that the real reason of her desire to place a considerable distance between herself and Paris was the suspicion that her intimacy with Forbin, which had long been an open secret in her Household, was in danger of being discovered by her mother, which meant that the Emperor would sooner or later be informed, and very unpleasant consequences follow.

About the middle of May, she set out for the South, leaving Forbin in Paris, and journeyed to Lyons, where she was to be the guest of Joseph Fesch. Her arrival had been preceded by a letter from *Madame Mère* to the cardinal-archbishop, in which she declared that she was "far from tranquil about her [Pauline's] position, in several ways"; and the princess soon perceived, from his Eminence's manner and the admonitions which he bestowed upon her, that his suspicions were thoroughly aroused. When, after three rather trying days, she left Lyons, her uncle—as

[1] This letter has been published by M. Arthur Lévy, in his interesting work, *Napoléon intime*.

she had not brought her Almoner with her—insisted on one of his chaplains, Isoard by name, accompanying her, on the plea that she ought not to be without spiritual direction. But, if the cardinal had anticipated that he would in this way be kept fully informed of his niece's conduct, he was sadly disillusioned, since Pauline manœuvred so adroitly, that, ere many days had passed, the worthy Isoard had become quite devoted to her interests.

On reaching Aix-les-Bains, the princess persuaded her Chamberlain, M. de Montbreton, and her *Dame d'honneur*, Madame de Bréhan, who had been responsible for arousing the suspicions of her mother,[1] to remain there and take a course of the baths, while she herself, accompanied only by those members of her entourage upon whose discretion she could rely, repaired to the little watering-place of Gréoulx, in the Lower Alps, whose waters, she assured her anxious relatives, were working miracles.

Freed from the surveillance of Montbreton and Madame de Bréhan, she looked forward with intense impatience to a reunion with Forbin, and, in the meanwhile, consoled herself for their enforced separation by addressing to him the

[1] Concerning Montbreton, *Madame* wrote to Fesch: "I see only one person in her [Pauline's] suite who is deserving of my confidence, namely M. de Montbreton. I have charged him to send me news of her in the fullest detail, and not to allow me to remain in ignorance of anything which happens." It was certainly a prudent move on Pauline's part to leave him at Aix-les-Bains!

most tender epistles—epistles which bear a singular resemblance to those which she had once written to Fréron, even to the passionate post-scripts in Italian. Here is a specimen:

Gréoulx

10 June, 1 o'clock afternoon

Well-beloved, no letters from thee this morning. I am very impatient to receive them since, in thy last, thou didst say that thou wast suffering from an attack of fever. I trust that it will be nothing serious, and that my A . . . [Auguste] will soon be quite well. I took this morning my bath and four glasses of water. . . . On leaving my bath, I found myself very weak, but I am sure it does me good. You wrote to Ma . . . . that thou wouldst soon come to Aix, and that thou hadst been ill, but that Madame Dorville had taken the greatest care of thee, and that *thou hadst been so pampered* that thou wast very much better. Happy Madame Dorville! To take care of thee, to see thee, to be able to give free expression to her feelings for thee; her lot is one to be envied. As for myself, who am obliged to put restraint upon myself, to dissimulate, but who love thee, who cherish thee, who have already given thee so many proofs of it, and who can know no happiness save through thee. Ah! Art thou not my spouse? Has mine deserved this title, so sweet, so sacred? No; he has not deserved it; for otherwise you would not be mine. Moreover, he ought to return me love for love, confidence for confidence . . . to believe that everything I do is for our good, for the welfare of our love. I have re-

flected upon this, and I am more than ever of opinion that all about us should be fully persuaded that everything is over between us, that we may be at ease. Otherwise, what will happen? The doctor[1] has quite decided to play the very devil, and to take himself off. It is he who has revealed everything to M. Ha[2] . . . not from malice, but from fear and foolishness. Mamma, my uncle, know everything, for thou hast no idea what I suffered at Lyons, and the tears that I shed on learning that we were discovered. Madame de B . . . [Bréhan] took advantage of this moment to tell me that the manner thou didst conduct thyself before her was outrageous, and that she was not the person to permit us to behave before her as we had done in Paris. Thou canst understand what I must have suffered. I, who am kind, and have given her my whole confidence. As for M. de Mont[breton], thou knowest better than any one how he has behaved. He has been the cause of our separation, and of many evils. He has betrayed my confidence, and in a way very hard for a [ ]. . . . In order to impose upon every one, the greatest care is necessary, sacrifices must be made, privations must be endured, if thou dost wish to keep me. I will write and tell thee the way in which thou art to behave: thou must submit and believe that I am suffering more than thyself from this constraint, which will save us from much unpleasantness. . . . Besides, if my husband comes, we shall be compelled to submit to it. Thus, we are only anticipating the inevitable.

[1] Peyre, her physician-in-ordinary.

[2] Hallé, whom, as we have mentioned, Peyre had called into consultation.

LOUIS NICOLAS PHILIPPE AUGUSTE, COMTE DE FORBIN

FROM AN ENGRAVING BY REINAUD AFTER THE DRAWING BY INGRES. (BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE)

Adieu, adieu. I am going to try and get a little repose, for I have never written at such length, but thou knowest well that for thee I do the impossible, and for thee alone. This evening, I will write again.

9.30 p.m.

I have been for a drive; the weather was charming. They chose a road which we might traverse in a *calèche*. We went in two *calèches*, each drawn by four horses; but I was sad. Neither work nor distractions can replace thee for a moment, even in my thoughts. Madame . . . is ill with fever, so that I am alone with the doctor and Isoard, who is established here at the request of my uncle, who has written to him. He is a good lad, but silly, as they all are. I have arranged the way in which thou mayst come to my bath and remain all the time I am there; but Madame Du . . .[1] is there, as well as the gentlemen who are here; but do not be frightened; they are reduced to the doctor and M. Isoard, and I have expressly arranged that my well-beloved can come there; but I fear that its heat may inconvenience him. For myself, in spite of the persons who will be there, I shall see only thee. How this solitude will please me, when thou wilt be there! With discretion, we shall always be happy. I await with impatience thy news about the fever. Bring thy painting materials, in order to make pretty things for me. My cottage is beginning to get in order; I am growing flowers everywhere. I am doing everything possible, in order that my well-beloved may approve of it. By the way,

[1] Madame Ducluzel, a *femme de charge*.

I forgot to tell thee my husband has been appointed general. He writes me charming letters and full of love; I do not understand where that can come from. But I conclude, for I am tired of writing so much. The waters make me rather weak. *Addio, caro, sempre amico, amante caro, si ti amo ti amaro sempre; carcado veni ma mando.* To-morrow, I will write thee thy orders as to the way in which thou art to behave here. I shall take the most scrupulous care to do it well. I am going to try and sleep, but I dream always of thee, and, for some time past, more than ever. *Si ti amo di piu, caro idolo mio. Ti mando di fiori che sono stati nel, mio sino le o coprati bacci. . . . Ti amo ci io sola.*[1]

M. de Forbin duly arrived, and Pauline found his society so entertaining that she remained at Gréoulx until the late autumn, and not even the return of the Emperor, or the marriage of Jérôme, or the visit of the Court to Fontainebleau, were able to induce her to interrupt her cure. "I am still in my desert," she writes to Lucien, "separated from all the world, and occupied entirely with the care of my health."[2]

From Gréoulx she removed to Nice, but soon quitted it for Grasse, stopping for some days on her way thither at the country-house of Forbin's mother. It seems to have been her intention to

[1] Published by M. Frédéric Masson, *Napoléon et sa famille.*

[2] M. Turquan and M. d'Almeras, misled apparently by Madame de Rémusat, state that Pauline accompanied the Court to Fontainebleau, but her correspondence proves that she was at this time at Gréoulx.

pass the winter at Grasse; but, on a sudden, she made the discovery that it was insupportably dull, and announced her intention of returning to Nice. The cause of this alteration in her plans appears to have been the termination of her romance with Forbin. Either that gentleman had ceased to please, or he had received an intimation from an influential quarter that it would be advisable for him to exchange the service of the princess for one more honourable, if less agreeable. Any way, he resigned his post, accepted a commission in the army, and was promptly despatched to join Junot in Portugal.

As for Pauline, such was her impatience to leave Grasse that, although, owing to recent heavy rains, the country between that town and Nice was flooded in several places, and she was warned that the journey would involve considerable danger, she firmly refused to postpone her departure. The consequence was that she narrowly escaped being drowned, and had to take refuge in a mill until the floods had subsided.

At Nice, the princess installed herself in a charming villa in the environs of the town, belonging to a certain M. Vinaille, with a large garden planted with orange and lemon trees, which sloped gently down to the sea. On the shore opposite the villa, guards were posted, for fear lest one of the British frigates cruising off the coast might send in her boats and endeavour to carry off the Emperor's sister.

The time, at first, passed very agreeably. The princess several times honoured the theatre with her presence; she dined with the Prefect, and one night condescended to allow herself to be serenaded by a party of artistes and amateur vocalists of the town, supported by a considerable orchestra. But, after a few days, she fell a prey to ennui, as she did everywhere. The Emperor was in Italy, and she wrote begging permission to join him at Turin. It was refused; the roads, wrote Napoleon, were in far too dangerous a condition for any one in a delicate state of health to travel over. She must remain at Nice until the spring, when he hoped to see her again in Paris.

Pauline had to accept the inevitable, but she found Nice terribly dull; the Riviera of a century ago was a far less entertaining locality than the Riviera of to-day; the enterprising M. Blanc was still in his cradle. What was there to do? Music, some one suggested; the young Italian composer Blangini, of whom she had taken lessons in singing, and whom, some time before, she had appointed "Director of her Musicians," was again in Paris. Why did she not send for him and resume the cultivation of her voice? Pauline thought the suggestion an excellent one, and, a week or two later, Blangini arrived at the Villa Vinaille in a luxurious travelling carriage, which the princess had sent to transport him thither.

The young composer was an interesting personality. In 1799, he had come to Paris from Turin, his native city, with his mother and four young brothers and sisters, of whom he was the sole support, for, though not yet eighteen, he had already composed romances and operas. His youth, his devotion to his family, his talents, and his good looks procured him a favourable reception in musical circles, and, after he had completed and produced an unfinished work of his compatriot Della Maria, *la Fausse Duègne*, fashionable Paris took him to its bosom. The concerts which he gave on Sundays were crowded, the feminine element largely predominating; he gave singing lessons to great ladies—it was positively astonishing the number who suddenly found themselves possessed by an overwhelming desire to have their voices trained—his compositions sold by the thousand. In 1805, Blangini was nominated *Kapellmeister* to the King of Bavaria, but, after a short residence in Munich, he returned to Paris, where Pauline became one of his pupils, and was so pleased with her professor's talent—or rather his person—that she appointed him "Director of her Musicians." The attraction was undoubtedly mutual, for when, shortly afterwards, Joséphine, in the hope of mortifying her sister-in-law, offered the young Italian the coveted post of "*Compositeur de la Chant de Sa Majesté, l'Impératrice*," which would have necessitated his

resignation of the other appointment, he declined the honour.

With the arrival of Blangini at Nice, Pauline's ennui vanished as the mist before the sun. She revealed a passion for music which no one had even suspected; it seemed as though she could not have enough of it, or do sufficient honour to its brilliant exponent. She sang duets with Blangini, in that tongue which she used to express the tenderest sentiments of her heart—one of that gentleman's own composition, which began with the words: "*Sempre saro constante, sempre t'adorero*" seems to have been a particular favourite—he accompanied her on her excursions to neighbouring places of interest; he played to her in the gloaming; he played to her when the moon shed its silvery rays over the blue waters of the Mediterranean, and it would even appear that the princess sometimes discussed musical matters with him long after the rest of her Household were wrapped in slumber.

During her stay at Nice, Pauline conceived a fancy to make a pilgrimage to Antibes, to revisit the house where she had resided with her mother and sisters in 1794. She resolved to make the journey by sea.

"A spacious boat was hired," writes Blangini, who, needless to say, was of the party, "and was decorated with flags and garlands. In the centre a pavilion for the princess was erected, while on either side rowers in picturesque cos-

tumes made the boat fly along the water, so that a poet could not have failed to compare it to the barge of Cleopatra advancing to meet Antony.

"The commandant of Antibes was warned of the arrival of the princess, and, on her entering the harbour, she was saluted by a salvo of twenty-one guns. The commandant welcomed her as she disembarked and conducted her to his hôtel, where preparations had been made on a magnificent scale for the reception of a sister of the Emperor. A splendid dinner was served, after which there was a reception and a grand ball. The following day, we went to visit the old house, the goal of our pilgrimage. It was a rather pretty bourgeois residence, but of modest appearance. I know not how to give an idea of the delight which the princess manifested on finding herself again in this place; she ran about like a child and explained to us how the rooms were apportioned: 'That was my mother's room; as for myself, I slept in this little cabinet near her; my sisters were on the other side; there is the room which my brother Napoleon occupied when he came to pay us an unexpected visit, and to spend a couple of days with us. How he loved us!'

"After going all over the house several times, we returned to Antibes, where the gallantry, the magnificence, and the good taste of the commandant were again in evidence; and next day we re-embarked to return to Nice."[1]

[1] Blangini, *Souvenirs*.

But Pauline's stay in Provence was drawing to a close. On the occasion of his recent visit to Italy, Napoleon had decided that Turin stood in need of a Court, to impart to it more life and animation, for, since the expulsion of the House of Savoy, its prosperity had declined, and many of its inhabitants looked back with regret to the days when their city had been one of the gayest in Italy. At the same time, aware that the continued separation of the Prince and Princess Borghese was creating a scandal, he determined to put an end to it, and to compel the ill-assorted couple to pass some months of each year together. Accordingly, by a *senatus consultum* of February 2, 1808, he erected the Government-General of the Departments beyond the Alps into a great dignity of the Empire, the seat of which was to be at Turin, and, a fortnight later, nominated as Governor-General his brother-in-law Camillo Borghese, and informed Pauline that she must accompany her husband to Italy and assist him in carrying out his Majesty's intentions. Their manner of life, their expenditure, their Household, the salaries of the various officials which composed it, the number of balls, receptions and dinners which they were to give, the etiquette which they were to observe—all were carefully fixed for them by the Emperor and were to permit of no deviation. They would live together—he would tolerate no more separate establishments—in that part of the royal palace

which was known as the Palais Chablais; they would also be allowed the use of the other residences formerly belonging to the King of Sardinia, and the Crown would maintain for them a hunting-lodge at Stupinigi. They would have a governor of the palace, with the prefect of the palace under his orders. The prince's entourage was to consist of six chamberlains, four equerries, four aides-de-camp, and a secretary. The princess's, of a *dame d'honneur*, twelve ladies-in-waiting, six chamberlains, and four equerries; and the services of twelve pages were to be shared in common. Every Sunday, the prince and princess would hold a reception, in the name of the Emperor, in the State apartments. Once a week, the princess would hold a reception in her own. Borghese's salary was a munificent one, amounting, with various extra allowances, to close upon 900,000 francs. Pauline's allowance was raised to 480,000 francs, exclusive of 100,000 for her toilette; but the Emperor, to put some check upon her caprices, decided to place the money in the prince's hands.[1]

Pauline received the news of her husband's elevation with very mixed feelings. The pros-

[1] It was about this time that the Emperor persuaded his brother-in-law to sell to the French nation, for 18,000,000 francs, his magnificent collection of statues and paintings. Borghese had, some time before, declined an offer of one million sterling from England, and he appears to have yielded to Napoleon's wishes with the worst possible grace. His collection was placed in the Museum of the Louvre.

pect of having a Court of her own—even a vice-regal Court—pleased her vanity, but the obligation of spending a considerable part of each year in the company of "that idiot," as she called poor Camillo, was a heavy price to pay for the privilege. Moreover, she disliked the conditions which the Emperor had imposed, particularly that which gave Borghese the control of her revenues and rendered him master of everything. Finally, Napoleon had not seen fit to nominate Blangini to a post in her Household, and, though she might persuade the composer to accompany her to Turin in a private capacity, it would be impossible for her to enjoy his society as freely as she desired. Altogether, she felt that Fortune was using her very hardly.

However, towards the middle of April, Borghese arrived at Nice, to fetch his wife and to make with her a sovereign entry into his government, and, in spite of her reluctance to accompany him to Turin, she was compelled to resign herself to her fate. On the 19th, somewhat consoled by Blangini's promise to follow her incognito, and by the arrival of seven magnificent Court gowns, which Leroy had made for her, together with a whole host of other costly confections, she consented to start on her journey.

It was a sensational departure, and excited the liveliest curiosity among the Niçois: seven or eight large travelling-carriages piled high with trunks and valises, band-boxes, and dressing-cases;

postilions and outriders in sumptuous liveries; a sedan-chair borne by four gigantic lackeys, in which the princess—who was arrayed in "a beautiful Amazon costume of amaranth cashmere embroidered in gold," specially designed for the occasion by M. Léger of Paris—proposed to traverse the most dangerous parts of the road; negroes, monkeys, lap-dogs, parrots, and all the paraphernalia which Pauline insisted on taking with her wherever she went.

The journey was a trying one, for, owing to the severity of the past winter, the mountain roads were in a terrible state, while her Imperial Highness was in one of her most capricious humours. Scarcely had she entered her carriage than she complained that she was being shaken to pieces, and called for her sedan-chair; then, after being carried for a few hundred yards, wished to return to the carriage. One moment, she declared that she was freezing and caused herself to be swathed in rugs and shawls until she resembled a mummy; the next, threw off all her wraps, crying out that she was being stifled. She tormented her unfortunate husband in every conceivable way, and announced her intention of taking precedence of him on their arrival in Turin and of replying to the addresses of the authorities; and when he ventured to point out that, as Governor-General, this duty devolved upon him, tartly rejoined that, if he had not married the sister of the Emperor, he would have

been nothing at all. "The ennui and impatience, with great difficulty restrained, which were visible on the prince's countenance," writes his secretary, Villemarest, "were calculated to excite compassion; and, so far as was possible, he made the journey on foot."[1]

At length, to the great relief of the whole party, they reached Racconigi, a beautiful country-house of the King of Sardinia, the park and the gardens of which had been designed by Le Nôtre, where they received the authorities of Turin, who came to offer their homage to the prince and princess. On the morrow, their Highnesses made their entry into the city, amid the firing of cannon, the ringing of church-bells, and the frenzied acclamations of the people. For the Piedmontese, after having formed during the Revolution the advance-guard of the Continental coalition against France, had become loyal subjects of Napoleon, whom they looked upon as a compatriot.

The next few days were consecrated to festivities of various kinds. The city offered their Highnesses a superb fête at the Opera-House. The whole of the ground floor of the theatre was reserved for the ladies; the men moved about among them. At the end of the *salle*, on a daïs, was placed the *fauteuil* of the Emperor, in accordance with the custom then observed at all important public ceremonies; and, on the present

[1] Maxime de Villemarest, *Souvenirs d'un Inconnu*.

occasion, the adoration of the sovereign was even carried to the length of stationing all the persons attached to his service behind the vacant seat, just as though his Majesty were actually present. On the right of the Imperial *fauteuil*, was a chair for the Governor-General, on the left one for his consort. In the course of the evening, the prince and princess, desiring to imitate the practice of the Emperor, rose from their seats and made the circuit of the *salle*, exchanging a few words with each of the ladies present; and it was remarked that, though the company included all the most beautiful women in Turin, not one could compare with Pauline, who was followed in her progress round the room by a murmur of genuine admiration. When the orchestra began a French air, the princess, who could be tactful enough on the rare occasions when she condescended to court popular favour, immediately sent to stop it, exclaiming loud enough to be overheard by all about her: "No, not that; let us have Italian music; it is the most charming. A montferrina! A montferrina!" The company was delighted, and the house resounded with "*vivas.*"[1]

Their Highnesses returned the hospitality of the city by a series of grand receptions, balls, dinners, and suppers; and it would be difficult to say which were the most pleased, the citizens by the good cheer provided for them by the Governor's chef, who drew a salary of 12,000 francs—

[1] Maxime de Villemarest, *Souvenirs d'un Inconnu.*

the pay of a general of division—or their wives and daughters by the opportunities of dancing and flirtation and the display of toilettes which the princess's entertainments afforded.

It was an excellent beginning; but Pauline very soon began to find the duties which her husband's official position imposed upon her intolerably irksome. She resented having to attend Mass every Sunday, in order to edify her good people by an example of piety; she disliked having to hold receptions on fixed days, whether she felt in the humour for entertaining or not; to show herself in the Valentino—the Corso of Turin—every afternoon, and to go through all the rest of the routine which the Emperor insisted upon. Moreover, Borghese, acting upon instructions from Napoleon, showed himself far from complaisant in financial matters, and she found her expenditure in consequence sadly restricted. Before she had been a week in Turin, she rebelled, and, on the plea of ill-health, went off to the hunting-lodge at Stupinigi, to sing duets with Blangini, who had fulfilled his promise to follow her to Italy.

But here a terrible mortification awaited her. The composer, alarmed apparently by the jealousy which his favour was arousing among the princess's entourage—there were a number of Italians attached to it now, and he knew that the enmity of his compatriots is apt to take a peculiarly unpleasant form—declined to remain and took

himself off to Paris, to the despair of Pauline, who had not yet had time to grow tired of him.

Deprived of the consolation of Blangini's society, the princess decided that Italy was altogether insupportable, and wrote to the Emperor, declaring that the climate of Piedmont was ruining her health, and demanding permission to go to some watering-place in France, in order to re-establish it. "I am willing," replied Napoleon from Bayonne, "for you to go to the waters of the Valley of Aosta. I am grieved to hear that your health is bad. I presume that you are prudent, and that it is in no way your own fault." And he recommends her to "make herself beloved, to be affable to every one, to preserve an even temper, and to make the prince happy."

Pauline, however, did not want to go to the Valley of Aosta any more than she wanted to make her husband happy; she had set her heart on getting back to France, and eventually to Paris, and intended to do so. To compass her purpose, she was seized with fainting-fits and convulsions in the middle of the night; she refused all food, declaring that her digestive powers were unequal even to the lightest broth, and, in short, "suffered everything which she wished to suffer." The doctors were in despair, and when, on May 30, Joseph Bonaparte, who was on his way from Naples to Bayonne, to assume that crown which he was to find so exceedingly uncomfort-

able, arrived at Turin, they assured him that nothing but a sojourn at Aix-les-Bains could re-establish the health of their august patient, and implored him to take upon himself the responsibility of her departure. Joseph, a kind-hearted man, consented, and wrote to the Emperor:

I have found Paulette here in a deplorable state of health. She has eaten nothing for a week, and is unable to take even the lightest broth. The doctors have told me that she ought to leave as soon as possible the damp atmosphere of Turin and go to the baths at Aix. Her husband was hesitating, because he had not yet received your Majesty's reply to the permission he had requested for this journey; but I did not delay an instant to tell him to send his wife away, and that I would answer for it to your Majesty, who desired before all things to preserve his sister's life.[1]

Two days after this was written, came a letter from Napoleon, in which he was unfeeling enough to express the opinion that Pauline's illness was merely "a necessary consequence of the spring," and refused her permission to leave her husband's government. But the bird had already flown and was well on her way to Aix-les-Bains. From that agreeable resort, fearful lest the Emperor should order her back to Turin and her Camillo, she continued the little comedy and caused the

[1] Published by M. Frédéric Masson, *Napoléon et sa famille.*

most dolorous reports of her condition to be despatched to her anxious relatives. By the beginning of July, these bulletins had become so alarming that the general impression seems to have been that the poor lady's days were numbered, and *Madame Mère*, accompanied by Fesch, started in all haste for Aix, travelling day and night, lest haply they should arrive too late; while Louis, from The Hague, wrote begging earnestly for news of his dear sister. "When I think of her bad health," he writes, "what sufferings she has endured for so long, and how many misfortunes she has met with in life, I am deeply grieved."

When *Madame* reached Aix, Pauline, needless to observe, was still alive, and, indeed, so far from being moribund, that, a few days later, she was able to set out for Paris, having coaxed her mother into persuading the Emperor to accord her permission. *Madame*, however, appears to have entertained some doubt as to the gravity of her daughter's condition, and, in a letter to Lucien, she merely remarks "that Paulette's health is worse than usual." Élisa had no doubt at all about the matter. "Paulette has been making game of us," she writes to her brother. "I said that she was deceiving the Emperor, for her illness is nothing else than the desire to go to Paris."

The princess received permission from the Emperor to take up her quarters at her hôtel

in the Rue Faubourg Saint-Honoré; but Borghese, convinced that she had deceived him, protested against her being allowed to reside in Paris, and it was therefore decided that she should go to the Château of Villiers, which Napoleon had lately purchased from the Murats. She was loud in her denunciations of her husband's cruelty in keeping her at Turin, "although he had seen that the climate was killing her," and of the stinginess he had displayed in money matters—the poor man had merely been carrying out Napoleon's instructions—and wheedled forty thousand francs out of Laffitte, the banker, to keep her afloat until the Emperor returned from Spain. When his Majesty arrived, she brought all her powers of persuasion to bear upon him, with the result that he not only gave his consent to her remaining permanently in France, but decided that, from January 1, 1809, she should enjoy, provisionally, a revenue of 600,000 francs, independently of that of the prince, and the château and estate of Neuilly, which Caroline had surrendered to the Emperor.

But this was only an earnest of what was to follow. During the winter, imitating the policy which Caroline had pursued with so much success, Pauline consecrated herself entirely to the service of the Emperor, diverting him by balls, concerts, charades, and entertainments of all kinds. And behold! in March, she found her income augmented, by means of a more advan-

tageous arrangement in regard to Guastalla, and by charges on the revenues of various German principalities in her favour, to the sum of 1,300,000 francs. "In which dispositions, his Majesty desired her to see a proof of the affection which he bore her."

CHAPTER XXIII

Murat, disappointed in his hopes of the Crown of Poland, returns to Paris—Successful intrigue of Caroline to bring about a fresh rupture between Louis and Hortense—The Murats at Fontainebleau—Relations of Caroline with Metternich, Talleyrand, Fouché, and Maret—Caroline's *bal masqué* at the Elysée—Mlle. Guillebeau—Murat becomes Lieutenant of the Emperor in Spain, and is persuaded that Napoleon intends to make him King—He is offered his choice between the thrones of Naples and Portugal—He accepts Naples—He falls ill, is relieved of his command in Spain, and goes to Barèges—Caroline secures for herself the succession to the Crown of Naples, in the event of her surviving her husband—Heavy burdens imposed by Napoleon upon Naples—The Emperor compels the Murats to surrender to him the whole of their property in France, in return for very inadequate compensation.

IF the Peace of Tilsit had put an end for a time to the ambitious hopes of Caroline, her husband regarded it with equal dissatisfaction. Murat had, for some months past, cherished the pleasing illusion that the Emperor intended to re-establish the kingdom of Poland and to place the crown of the Jagellons upon his brother-in-law's head, and the arrangement arrived at upon the Niemen had been a severe blow to him. It was not, indeed, until the very day of the memorable interview between the autocrats of the East and West that he learned that his hopes were vain, when Napoleon, seeing

him arrive dressed in a rich Polish costume, which he had assumed to flatter the national susceptibilities of those whom he fondly imagined were to be his subjects, exclaimed angrily: "Go away and put on your general's uniform; you look like Franconi."[1]

An awakening so rude after a dream so beautiful was naturally extremely disconcerting, and, for a while, Murat was almost tempted to abandon his ambition of becoming a king. But his Gascon optimism speedily reasserted itself, and, in the belief that Paris was likely to prove a far more profitable field for intrigue than Düsseldorf, he rejoined his wife, to endeavour, with her skilful co-operation, to secure the royal crown which they both so ardently desired.

For the moment, however, Caroline's attention was engaged by an intrigue which had for its object the gratification of her hatred rather than of her ambition.

After the death of her little son, Napoleon Charles (May 5, 1807), the Queen of Holland had gone to Cauterets, in the Pyrenees, in the hope of re-establishing her health. Here she met M. Decazes, afterwards *Madame Mère's* private secretary, and later, Louis XVIII's favourite and Prime Minister, who had recently lost his young wife. Touched by the similarity of their sorrows, Hortense was very gracious to M. Decazes, and "being too absorbed in her grief to pay the

[1] Franconi was the famous Paris circus-proprietor.

attention she should have done to conventional usage,"[1] admitted him to a degree of intimacy which the comparative seclusion in which she lived rendered somewhat conspicuous. M. Decazes was young and handsome; the soil of fashionable watering-places is notoriously favourable to the propagation of scandal, and soon letters began to reach Paris which gave to the affair an importance which it was very far from deserving.

When, in the following August, Louis brought his wife to Paris, it seemed that their common loss had established a new bond between them, and that a brighter future lay before the ill-mated pair; but this reconciliation did not last long. From the days when, as a schoolgirl at Madame Campan's, Hortense had been held up to her as a shining example of all the virtues, Caroline had disliked her sister-in-law, and this dislike had been aggravated into a feeling of the bitterest hatred by Napoleon's preference for Hortense's children over her own. Moreover, she foresaw that the establishment of amicable relations between the King and Queen of Holland might become a formidable obstacle to the dissolution of the Emperor's marriage, to which he was now all but reconciled. She therefore decided that a fresh rupture must be brought about, even at the cost of destroying Louis's new-found happiness and peace of mind, and proceeded to engineer it with her customary dexterity.

[1] Madame de Rémusat, *Mémoires*.

HORTENSE DE BEAUHARNAIS, QUEEN OF HOLLAND

FROM AN ENGRAVING AFTER THE DRAWING BY PAUQUET. (BRITISH MUSEUM)

She related to her brother, while artfully pretending to attach no importance to them herself, the stories told of Hortense's intimacy with Decazes at Cauterets, and Louis's jealousy and suspicion were at once rekindled. But she went much further than this. The Queen of Holland was, greatly to her husband's satisfaction, again enceinte—the result of the recent reconciliation—and Caroline did not hesitate to instill doubts into her brother's mind as to the paternity of the child whose birth was expected in the spring.[1] The result was what might have been anticipated. The unhappy man at first refused to credit these malignant insinuations; but the seed so adroitly sown did not fail to bear fruit, and, with it, all hope of concord at The Hague definitely disappeared.

When, towards the end of September 1807, the Court removed to Fontainebleau, for that visit of which Madame de Rémusat has left us so interesting an account, the Murats accompanied it and, in conformity with the wishes of Napoleon, displayed great magnificence and entertained on the most lavish scale. "The Grand-Duchess of Berg applied herself to be extremely agreeable to us all. She lived in the château, at her own expense, in very luxurious style, and kept a sumptuous table. She was always served on gilt plate, in this respect outdoing the Emperor, whose silver-gilt services

[1] Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, afterwards the Emperor Napoleon III.

were used on State occasions only. She invited all the residents in the château in turn, and received them with the utmost graciousness, even those whom she did not like."[1]

Though she appeared to be thinking of nothing but pleasure, Caroline was not wasting her time. She held in her shapely white hands the threads of several intrigues. She exercised her fascinations on the Austrian Ambassador, Metternich, whose attentions to the Grand-Duchess became the subject of a good deal of comment. The most saw in this intimacy, as in her affair with Junot, merely the caprice of a coquette, whereas it was actuated by the most profound calculation. Caroline was aware that Metternich already possessed great influence at his Court, and she believed that he might be placed by the course of events in a position to serve her. Nor was she mistaken, and the affection which the diplomatist conceived for her might, when the *débâcle* arrived, have preserved for Murat his throne of Naples, had he been content to follow his wife's counsels.

She also made advances to Talleyrand, with whom, owing to her friendship with Fouché, her relations had of late been somewhat strained, soliciting his advice upon various matters, applauding his *bons mots*, and pretending to be deeply impressed by even the most ordinary observations which fell from his lips. It is rare for a man to show himself insensible to the

[1] Madame de Rémusat, *Mémoires*.

flattery of a pretty woman, particularly when the lady in question happens to be a princess; and Talleyrand, whose vanity was colossal, was not backward in responding to her overtures. Then, the princess confided to him that the spectacle of her brothers and sisters-in-law seated upon thrones inspired her with feelings of envy, as she felt herself equally fitted to occupy so exalted a position, and she reproached him with opposing her elevation. "M. de Talleyrand objected that Murat's abilities were not brilliant, and indulged in some jests at his expense, which were not resented very strongly. The princess abandoned her husband to M. de Talleyrand's sarcasms without compunction, but she urged that she would not leave the whole charge of ruling in Murat's hands, and she gradually, by certain seductive methods, induced M. de Talleyrand to be less opposed to her wishes."[1]

While thus cultivating Talleyrand, Caroline maintained her good relations with his rival Fouché, though he only visited her with extreme precaution, in consequence of the displeasure with which the Emperor regarded any intimacy between members of his family and the Minister of Police; and showed herself particularly gracious to Maret, who repaid her condescension by perpetually chanting her praises to the Emperor.

On the return of the Court to Paris, the Murats continued their lavish hospitality, and, though the

[1] Madame de Rémusat, *Mémoires*.

winter was an exceptionally brilliant one, the festivities at the Elysée easily bore away the palm. Every Friday, the Grand-Duchess gave a ball, to which from one hundred and fifty to two hundred persons were invited, and occasionally grand balls, when all who could lay claim to any social importance, were brought together. Constant speaks of a certain *bal masqué* at the Elysée, which the Emperor and Empress honoured by their presence, as "one of the most magnificent fêtes which was ever seen." The opera of *la Vestale*, which was then at the height of its popularity, inspired the idea of a quadrille, danced by priests and vestals, who entered the room to the sound of flutes and harps. Other quadrilles were danced by persons dressed as magicians and witches, and in Swiss and Tyrolese peasant-costume. All the dresses were exceedingly rich and exactly similar to one another, and one of the rooms in the palace had been converted for the occasion into a costumier's shop, which permitted the dancers to change four or five times during the evening, so that new guests appeared to be constantly arriving.[1]

There were many amusing incidents. Camillo Borghese came disguised as a Tyrolese peasant-girl, and might have passed for some time undiscovered, had he not yielded to the temptation to kiss one of the ladies. And Napoleon, who liked to divert himself in these saturnalia, exchanged masques and dominoes with Isabey, and gave

[1] Constant, *Mémoires*.

orders to the painter to personate him, which he did to perfection, notwithstanding the difficulty he experienced in concealing his hands, which were unusually large, while his Majesty's were small and beautifully formed.

The evening, however, did not pass off without an incident which somewhat interfered with the general good-humour which prevailed.

On a sudden, just when the gaiety was at its height, an imperious voice was heard exclaiming: "I desire that she shall instantly leave my house!" The voice was that of the Grand-Duchess of Berg, who was directing her First Chamberlain to expel from the ball-room a certain Mlle. Guillebeau, whom Queen Hortense had brought with her to lead the dance of the vestals. Mlle. Guillebeau's offence was that her charms had lately aroused a very lively interest in the breast of Murat, which Caroline, who, while claiming the fullest liberty herself, was by no means minded to extend a similar indulgence to her husband, deeply resented. The opportunity now afforded her of inflicting a public affront on her rival, and, at the same time, of causing mortification to the Queen of Holland, was one which her vindictive nature was not disposed to forgo.

Poor Mlle. Guillebeau, when the order was communicated to her, burst into tears, declared that the conduct of the Grand-Duchess was most unjust and cruel, and appealed to Hortense to

protect her. The Queen, who felt that the expulsion of her *protégée* would be a reflection upon herself, warmly espoused the lady's cause, and a very acrimonious discussion took place between her and Caroline. Ultimately, Mlle. Guillebeau was permitted to remain, but her pleasure was naturally spoiled, and her red eyes and tear-stained countenance must have presented a singular contrast to the garb of Folly which she was then wearing. All things considered, however, the motley would appear to have been a far more appropriate costume for the damsel than the white robe of a vestal, since Madame Junot tells us that she had the same cause of complaint against her as had her Imperial Highness.[1]

The spring of 1808 brought to the Murats the kingdom which they had so industriously manœuvred to secure, though it was not the one the ambitious pair coveted. On February 20, Napoleon, having perfected his plans against the Iberian Peninsula, appointed the Grand-Duke of Berg to be his Lieutenant in Spain and to command the French forces. How far Murat was at this time in the Emperor's confidence is a matter of dispute. The probability is that he was in entire ignorance of his real aims, as he repeatedly complains of the lack of that confidence which a brother-in-law has a right to expect.[2] What is of more importance, is that the reports sent by

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires.*

[2] Dr. Holland Rose, *The Life of Napoleon the First.*

his Lieutenant completely misled the Emperor as to the temper of the Spanish people, and inspired him with the conviction that they would tamely submit to any government that he chose to impose upon them;[1] and Murat must therefore be held in a great degree responsible for the affair of Bayonne and all the disasters which it entailed.

Murat appears to have been persuaded that he was about to receive, as the recompense of his services, the throne so treacherously wrested from the craven-hearted Bourbons, and the rigour which he displayed in suppressing the insurrection of May 2 at Madrid was no doubt prompted by the belief that he was defending his own property. So confident was he of success that he actually took possession of the apartments of the Prince of the Asturias at the palace; and his mortification was intense when, on May 4, he received the following letter from the Emperor:

[1] "I guarantee an insurrection impossible," he wrote. "Your Majesty is admired and adored throughout the whole of Spain, and it is to you that it looks for a happier destiny. . . ." "Your Majesty is awaited as the Messiah; your decisions, whatever they may be, will be oracles, and will be regarded as the assurance of future happiness; all Spain is aware that nothing but a government of your making can save it. . . ." "Sire, withdraw your confidence and esteem from me for ever, if I do not tell you the truth. I say, and I repeat, that your Majesty can dispose of Spain as you will; you are adored by the whole nation"; and so forth. For these despatches, see Lumbroso, *Correspondance de Joachim Murat*, and Masson's *Napoléon et sa famille*.

Bayonne, May 2

I intend the King of Naples [Joseph Bonaparte] to reign at Madrid. I wish to give you the Kingdom of Naples or that of Portugal. Let me know immediately what you think about the matter; for it must be settled in a day. In the meanwhile, you will remain as Lieutenant-General of the kingdom. You will tell me that you prefer to remain with me; that is impossible. You have a number of children, and, besides, with a wife like yours, you can absent yourself, if war calls you back to my side; she is very capable of being at the head of a regency. I will tell you, further, that the Kingdom of Naples is a much finer one than Portugal, since Sicily will be joined to it; you will then have six million inhabitants.[1]

To this letter Murat, skilfully dissimulating his disgust, replied as follows:

Madrid, May 5

Sire,—I received your Majesty's letter of May 2, and torrents of tears flow from my eyes in replying to you. When your Majesty thought that I should have demanded to remain near your person, you well understood my heart. Yes, I ask it; yes, I implore it, as the greatest favour that I have ever received from you. Accustomed to your kindness, accustomed to see you each day, to admire you, to adore you, to receive everything from you, how can I, alone, cast upon my own resources, fulfil duties so ex-

[1] Napoleon speaks of the conquest of Sicily as of a thing assured; but he must have been aware that it was a task which presented immense difficulties.

tensive, so sacred? I believe that I am incapable of doing so. As a favour, permit me to remain with you. Happiness is only to be found in affection; I find it near your Majesty! Sire, after having expressed to your Majesty my grief and my desires, I must resign myself and I place myself at your orders. However, in availing myself of the permission which you accord me to choose between Portugal and Naples, I can have no hesitation. I give the preference to the country in which I have already commanded, and in which I shall be able to serve your Majesty more usefully. I prefer Naples, and I must give your Majesty to understand that on no consideration should I accept the Crown of Portugal.

Napoleon would certainly have done better, since he had engaged in this discreditable affair, to have confided the throne of Ferdinand the Catholic and Charles V to this resolute and intrepid soldier, rather than to the incapable but well-meaning Joseph. In that event, it is quite probable that the revolts in the provinces would have been stamped out as effectually as the insurrection in the capital had been, and that, before many weeks had passed, Murat would have conquered his kingdom sword in hand. But the Emperor, as we have seen, did not anticipate any resistance to his wishes on the part of the Spaniards, much less that that resistance would have assumed such formidable dimensions; and, even if he had foreseen the course of events, it is doubtful if this would have induced him to

change his plans. What he desired to see at Madrid was, not a monarch, but a sort of glorified prefect, and Murat had shown, in the affair of Wesel, that he could not be relied upon to accept such a rôle.

However that may be, Murat found himself once more the dupe of his ambitious dreams, and, if he shed "torrents of tears," they were not of gratitude and emotion, as he wrote to the Emperor, but of anger and disappointment. However, he still cherished a hope that his brother-in-law's decision was not irrevocable, and, in this belief, entered into an intrigue with the new French Ambassador, Laforêt, with the object of proving to the Emperor that the Spaniards would never consent to accept Joseph as their king, while that, on the other hand, the Grand-Duke of Berg had conquered all hearts.

The intrigue failed; and Napoleon sent a severe rebuke to Laforêt, whereupon Murat fell ill and took to his bed. The doctors declared that his illness was occasioned by "a too assiduous attention to work," but it is probable that it was due as much to moral as to physical causes. Any way, he was unfit for duty for nearly a month, and the French forces in Spain were left without a chief, at a time when the utmost energy and activity were required to stem the fast-rising flood of insurrection. Finally, he begged the Emperor to relieve him of his command and authorise his return to France, and, at the end of June, repaired to

Barèges, "to seek physical health and moral calm."

As for Caroline, her joy on learning that she was at last to become a queen was such that, according to the Duchesse d'Abrantès, "it rendered her beside herself for several hours." And, though she no doubt shared to some extent her husband's mortification that the crown of Spain had escaped them, it is probable that she was, on the whole, well satisfied with the result of her labours.

On his way to Barèges, Murat had passed through Bayonne, where he invested his wife and the Marchese del Gallo, the Neapolitan Minister for Foreign Affairs, with full powers to treat on his behalf with the Emperor in regard to the conditions on which he was to hold his kingdom. The ambitious princess did not fail to take full advantage of such an opportunity. In the decree which had constituted Murat Duke of Berg and Cleves, the succession had been vested in his sons and their male descendants, and his wife's name had not been mentioned. But in the new decree, and also in Murat's treaty with the Emperor, Caroline secured the insertion of a clause which provided that, in the event of her surviving her husband, she herself should ascend the throne: "If her Imperial and Royal Highness the Princess Caroline survives her august husband, she will remain Queen of the Two Sicilies, and alone possess the title and powers

of sovereignty, which she will exercise to their full extent. The reason for this unique exception to a fundamental law is that this princess, who, by virtue of the present cession, made especially in her favour, places her family on the throne, cannot cease to take rank above her children."

Caroline was not so successful in her efforts to lighten the burdens which the Emperor desired to impose upon his brother-in-law's kingdom, and Joachim Napoléon—by which name the new king was to be known—found himself pledged, by an offensive and defensive alliance with France, to furnish, whenever required, a contingent of 21,000 soldiers and 25 pieces of cannon, to be paid and maintained at his own expense, save when summoned beyond the borders of Italy and the Empire, when Napoleon would be responsible for the men's rations and equipment. This contingent was to be quite independent of the army which Murat might desire to raise for the defence of his realm, as well as of the French army of occupation, of which he was to charge himself with the whole cost. He was also, if required, to furnish six ships of the line, six frigates, and six brigs to the Imperial Navy, while the strict execution of the Continental Blockade, with all its consequences, was of course imposed upon him. Caroline eventally obtained a slight reduction of the Neapolitan contingent, so long as Sicily remained unconquered; but this

was the only modification to which Napoleon would consent.

Nor did she fare any better where the private interests of herself and her husband were concerned. Murat would have much preferred to govern Naples from Paris, as he had governed Berg, or, at any rate, to have spent a part of each year in the French capital. But Napoleon did not approve of absentee rulers, while he was growing tired of Caroline's intrigues and importunities, and, in giving them the kingdom they coveted, he was determined that they should remain there and have no pretext for returning to France. He accordingly insisted that they should cede to him all the properties which they possessed in France: the Elysée, Neuilly, Villiers, and La Motte-Sainte-Heraye — the Hôtel Thélusson he had purchased from Murat some weeks before, in order to convert it into the Russian Embassy—with all the furniture, paintings, statues, and *objets d'art* which they contained. Caroline claimed as compensation for this surrender sixteen million francs, and, seeing that she had spent four millions on the embellishment of the Elysée and almost as much on Neuilly, her demand would appear to have been not unreasonable. Napoleon, at first, acquiesced, on condition that the money should be paid in three annual instalments; then, declared that he would not give more than ten millions; and, finally, at the moment when the treaty was

on the point of being signed, refused to pay any cash at all, and offered instead the Principality of Benevento, on the extinction of the family to whom it belonged, certain estates in Papal territory formerly belonging to the Farnese, and an annual payment of 500,000 francs out of the contribution which Naples made to the Imperial Treasury. Caroline accepted—she had indeed no option in the matter—though with a very bad grace; and the Murats thus parted with nearly the whole of the immense wealth which they had been at such pains to acquire, in return for what, in the event of a change in Napoleon's fortunes, would be practically valueless.

Singularly enough, Murat did not learn of the terms of this very one-sided treaty until it had actually been signed by the Marchese del Gallo, acting on his behalf; perhaps Caroline, with true wifely solicitude, feared that his intervention might counteract all the benefits he was receiving from his sojourn at Barèges, where he wrote that "he had discovered the Fountain of Youth." When he was informed of what had been done, he was highly indignant and addressed some strongly-worded observations to the Emperor. But it was then too late, and nothing remained for him but to ratify the treaty and to reflect that even a throne may be purchased at too high a price.

CHAPTER XXIV

Grief of *Madame Mère* at the rupture between the Emperor and Pius VII—She goes with Pauline to Aix-la-Chapelle—Beugnot's impressions of her—The Emperor returns from the Austrian campaign determined to divorce Joséphine—The family summoned to Paris—Elation of the Bonapartes, and particularly of *Madame Mère*, at the fall of their enemy—*Madame's* letter to Lucien—The divorce accomplished—The Bonapartes' desire that Lucien's eldest daughter Charlotte, called Lolotte, should be the new Empress, frustrated by her father's delay in sending her to Paris—Hopes of *Madame* that Lolotte will contribute to bring about a reconciliation between the Emperor and Lucien—Napoleon's proposition in regard to his brother—*Madame's* letter to Madame Lucien—Unavailing efforts to persuade Lucien to divorce his wife—Lolotte proves a broken reed, and is sent back to her father—Adventures of Lucien and his family.

MADAME MÈRE passed the last months of 1808 and the early part of the following year in Paris, writing long letters to her absent children, devoting a watchful eye to her investments, and superintending the work of the charitable organisations of which she was the patroness. As she prided herself on being a devout daughter of the Church—though it is doubtful if her religion, at this period of her life, was more than skin-deep—and had, besides, conceived a warm personal regard for Pius VII, she was much exercised in her mind by Napoleon's

annexation of the Papal States and the Bull of excommunication to which the Holy Father replied to his aggressions. "I foresee that your nephew will bring about his own downfall and that of the whole family," she wrote to Fesch. "He ought to be satisfied with what he has already obtained; by striving for more, he will lose all. I am never free from anxiety about my family, and I am very sure that I shall never regret having secured myself against reverses." Baron Larrey declares that she took this affair so much to heart that she became quite ill. Any way, in July, Corvisart declared that a "cure" was imperative, and *Madame* left Paris for Aix-la-Chapelle.

Pauline accompanied her, but, if we are to believe Beugnot, who was taking the waters at the same time, her mother's presence does not seem to have exercised much restraint upon that incorrigible *amoureuse*. "Her journey," he writes, "has sown, in more than one place, despair, in more than one other, hope. She has been followed to Aix, and does not know whether she will decide to recognise it; she has found there more than one adorer whose incense has up to the present been lost in smoke. She treats this subject with a charming levity. One would call her Atalanta, who runs over the flowers without leaving a trace of her footsteps." And he adds: "I said to myself on beholding her, and with a bitter regret: Happy the mortals who are still

at that beautiful age when one is permitted to carry one's vows to such altars!"

Beugnot has left us some very interesting impressions of *Madame Mère*, whom he visited several times during his stay at Aix-la-Chapelle. He was much struck by the way in which Letizia had contrived to preserve the beauty for which she had once been so celebrated. "She has all the beauty which is possible for a woman of her age, and, if Raphael had had her under his hand when he painted his admirable picture of the *Holy Family*, he would not have sought elsewhere that countenance of St. Anna which summarises well what Time has been powerless to efface from features so beautiful, that, in contemplating them, some amorous sentiment is always intermingled with the respect which age imposes."

The writer praises Letizia's intelligence and good-sense, though his sensitive ear was much pained by her deplorable accent, and the Corsican expressions with which she interlarded her conversation, and "which she did not take the trouble to translate." But what seems to have impressed him most, however, was her "*économie passionnée*," which had become, in his opinion, "a fixed idea, which had taken possession of her, and from which she would never be able to free herself." On his first visit, *Madame* began to ply him with questions relative to the cost of living in Aix. Beugnot, who left such sordid

matters to his *valet-de-chambre*, but did not like to confess as much, answered at random and, "in order to give *Madame* a good impression of his *savoir-faire*," underrated the expense considerably. "Unhappily, *Madame* took my boastings for current prices. From that very day, she began a campaign against her people and her tradesmen; she declared that she was being brutally robbed by both; she held me up as an example of some one who was exempt from the wrong which she deplored. She mentioned the articles and the prices I paid for them, and it was impossible to convince her that she was mistaken."[1]

Towards the end of October, the princesses left Aix-la-Chapelle for Fontainebleau, to welcome the returning victor of Wagram. The departure seems to have taken place none too soon, for one of Pauline's chamberlains confided to a friend that the gaiety of his august mistress "had approached so nearly to folly, that he desired nothing so ardently as to see the termination of this visit."

At Fontainebleau great news awaited them. The hopes of thirteen years were about to materialise: the divorce was a thing settled and determined upon.

The events of the past few months had made the rupture of Napoleon's childless marriage "a rigorous duty." The descents of the English

[1] Comte Beugnot, *Mémoires*.

upon the coasts, the intrigues of Fouché and Talleyrand, and the feebleness and inertia of the Government, had shown him that, during his absences from France, it was an imperative necessity that he should have in Paris some representative, around whom, in case of peril, his loyal subjects might rally. And that representative must be the heir to his glory—an heir whose claim to succeed him rested not upon decrees which found no response in the hearts of his people, and which Fouchés and Talleyrands might render mere waste-paper, but "upon a natural reversion physical and moral." This, in his eyes, had become the sole guarantee for the safety of his crown. And so the Emperor returned to France, victorious, not only over the Austrians, but over true and genuine affection, over the habits of thirteen years, and over that feebleness in dealing with the women of his family which is in such strange contrast to his harsh and overbearing treatment of others.

His resolution once taken, he determined to put it into execution with the least possible delay. The absent members of the Imperial Family, with the exception of Joseph, whom the little misunderstanding with his subjects detained in Spain, Lucien, still in disgrace, and Élisa, who was enceinte—whether by her husband or Cenami is a matter of opinion—were summoned to Paris; and while they were hastening thither from Italy,

Holland, and Germany, that pathetic scene immortalised by Constant and Bausset took place at the Tuileries, and Joséphine learned that the blow she had long dreaded was about to descend.

Napoleon had not thought fit to acquaint his relatives with his reason for desiring their presence in Paris, and their elation was consequently all the greater when they learned, on their arrival, that they had been called together to assist at the downfall of their detested sister-in-law.

For they all hated her, not only for her original offence in taking Napoleon from them, and in giving him a stepson and a stepdaughter infinitely superior in character and infinitely more worthy of his bounty than themselves; not only because they regarded her, though most unjustly, as the principal cause of the continued exile of Lucien, but each of them for some special reason. Pauline, because Joséphine was her rival, not, indeed, in beauty, but in grace and elegance; Caroline, because she was the mother of Hortense, whom she had detested from the time when they were schoolfellows; Élisa, because of the possession of those graces in which she herself was so singularly deficient; Joseph, because he had spied upon and intrigued against her from the first, and failed to shake her position; Louis, because she had brought about his unhappy marriage, although his unhappiness was

THE EMPRESS JOSÉPHINE

FROM THE PAINTING BY GÉRARD AT VERSAILLES

primarily due to his own morbid and suspicious nature; Jérôme, whom Joséphine had always treated with unvarying kindness, because she was the mother of Eugène de Beauharnais, of whom he was jealous.

But none of them rejoiced so much, because none of them hated so bitterly, as their mother —that woman whom Baron Larrey and other eulogists of the Bonapartes have held up to us as an example of every Christian virtue. "*Madame* hated Joséphine before she knew her; she hates her more since she knows her. She hates her for having captured her son Napoleon; she hates her for having deceived that son; for the love with which, all the same, she has inspired him; for the crown which she wears, for the superior rank which she occupies; for the necessity of yielding precedence to her, of dining with her, of appearing in her suite. She hates her for Lucien exiled and disgraced, for Louis ill-mated, for all her actions and all her life—and simply because she exists; and this hatred, not only does it extend to Hortense, but to the children of Hortense, notwithstanding that they are her own grandchildren. In what a tone she wrote to Fesch of the death of little Napoleon! Can that be the grandmother so full of tenderness for the two Lolottes, for Zénaïde, for the Murat children, for the little Napoléone [Élisa's daughter]? The explanation is, that beneath those features which, nevertheless, recall so strongly her own race, she

sees flowing the blood of Joséphine and Hortense; that is sufficient."[1]

And not only did she find in the downfall of her enemy the gratification of long years of rancorous hatred, but she built great hopes upon it. With what satisfaction does she write to Lucien!

Paris
12 December, 1809

My dear Son,—I have received your letter of the 15th of last month. I have already told you the manner in which the Emperor has expressed himself in regard to you. I am now able to add

[1] M. Frédéric Masson, *Napoléon et sa famille*. Here is *Madame's* letter to Fesch—or rather the passage therein—to which M. Masson refers:

"I have, my dear brother, to speak to you now of another matter, which grieves me sorely. M. Cambacérès has just left me; he came to announce the death of the little Napoleon, at The Hague. We learned that he was ill some days ago, but only through the journals. The father, who had sent couriers here, did not mention it. M. Corvisart came to tell us that he was starting to go and see him; and this morning comes the news of his death. You can judge of my consternation, not only on the child's account, but on that of the father, and the effect which this event may have on his health. I am very much afraid that all this will affect mine also." Not a word of compassion for the grief-stricken mother!

And, commenting on this letter, the ingenuous Baron Larrey remarks: "*Madame Mère* was greatly grieved by it [the death of Napoleon Charles], although she had the consoling thought that such a misfortune would perhaps bring together again, through excess of grief, the pair whom the fatality of their marriage had separated." Well, next to the divorce of Joséphine, and the restoration to favour of her beloved Lucien, and perhaps another million a year for herself, there was probably nothing which *Madame* more ardently desired than a separation between Louis and his wife.

that the reasons which have hitherto prevented you from sending Lolotte[1] no longer exist. The Emperor is about to divorce the Empress. The affair is determined upon and will soon be made public. Nothing is now in question except the forms to be observed.

Louis is also separated from his wife, but without a divorce. He is staying at my house. He is in better health than usual. I believe myself able to assure you that the sentiments of the Emperor for his family are already quite different from what they have been heretofore.

Do not show yourself obstinate, my dear son. Begin by doing what is required of you,[2] and I hope that, before long, we shall all be contented. What a consolation it will be for me, if I could see you here and embrace you, with the rest of the family!

Adieu, my dear son; I shall not say more to you about it. My health is good; I embrace you tenderly, with all your family.

Vostra affezionata madre,

L. Bonaparte[3]

A few days after this letter was written, the formalities connected with the divorce had been accomplished; Joséphine had left the Tuileries for Malmaison, and the Emperor was free to wed again.

Upon whom Napoleon's choice would fall was a question which had for some time past been agitating the minds of the Imperial Family. In

[1] Charlotte Bonaparte, Lucien's eldest daughter by his first marriage. *Madame Mère* was extremely anxious that she should be sent to Paris, for reasons which we are about to explain.

[2] To divorce his wife, "the widow Jouberthou."

[3] Published by Baron Larrey, *Madame Mère*.

spite of the weighty political reasons which could be urged in support of the Emperor's union with a princess of one of the reigning Houses of Europe, such a step was far from commending itself to his relatives; while they were still less favourably disposed to the idea of his seeking to conciliate Royalist opinion at home by taking to wife a member of one of the great families of the old noblesse. For the Bonapartes had remained Corsicans to the heart's core, and, if they had waged a relentless and unceasing war against Joséphine for so many years, it was mainly because only a woman of their own country and their own blood could find favour in their eyes. The position of Empress they regarded as an appanage of the family, and to bestow it upon a stranger was a species of robbery. The only marriage which could content them was that of Napoleon with one of his nieces, that is to say, with Charlotte, called Lolotte, Lucien's eldest daughter, since there was no other approaching a marriageable age. Thus, the quarrel between the two brothers would be composed; Lucien would return to France and receive the crown which was his due; no outside influence would dare to dispute with them the Imperial bounty, and all would go well.

It seems difficult to believe that Napoleon ever contemplated the possibility of marriage with his niece—a child who had not yet completed her fourteenth year—and when he con-

sented, in the early summer of 1808, to *Madame Mère's* inviting her to Paris, it seems to have been with the idea of marrying her to the unfortunate Prince of the Asturias. But it is certain that his mother and all the Bonapartes ardently desired the match,[1] and that, if Lucien, notwithstanding the urgent solicitations of *Madame*, had not delayed his consent to his daughter visiting Paris until the Austrian marriage had been decided upon, they would have made determined efforts to force their candidate upon the Emperor.

Nevertheless, *Madame* seems to have expected, or, at least, hoped for, great things from Lolotte's visit, since, if she succeeded in making a favourable impression upon Napoleon, she might materially contribute to bring about the long-deferred reconciliation between him and Lucien. "Lolotte has arrived," she writes, in a letter to the latter (March 8, 1810). "As soon as her toilette is ready, I shall take her to the Emperor, and I am already persuaded that she will be kindly received. I will write and tell thee about it to-morrow. Heaven grant that I have to announce to thee, at the same time, the only thing which is wanting to my happiness: your reconciliation.—*Vostra madre.*"

[1] "Up to the present," wrote Élisa to Lucien, on learning of Napoleon's intention to divorce Joséphine, "nothing gives me any inkling as to who will be the new wife of the Emperor. If my prayers were heard, this choice would put an end to a division very painful to my heart."

In the course of an audience which he accorded, on the morrow, to Lucien's *homme de confiance*, Campi, who had brought Lolotte from Canino to Paris, the Emperor adhered to the proposition which he had made some weeks before, namely, that he was prepared to receive Lucien into favour and recognise as legitimate the children of his second marriage, provided that he would divorce his wife. If he remained contumacious, he would not only refuse to give him any assistance, or allow the Imperial family to help him, but would no longer countenance his residing within the borders of the Empire, or of any European country with which France had diplomatic relations, and would insist upon his departure for America.

On leaving the Tuileries, Campi repaired to the Hôtel de Brienne, where *Madame* and all the Bonapartes who were then in Paris were assembled, and informed them of what had passed. They were unanimously of opinion that Lucien ought to give way; and, the following day, we find *Madame* writing a despairing letter to her daughter-in-law, entreating her voluntarily to release her son.

Paris, March 10, 1810

You know all the misfortunes which your marriage has brought upon our family, and can judge how heavy they are by the step which I am about to propose to you. The Emperor insists on your divorce. It is for you to decide Lucien to con-

sent to it, and, in the event of his refusal, to demand it yourself. It is the only way to escape the disgrace which threatens him, as well as your children and all who belong to you. If, on the other hand, you do what is asked of you, you will ensure the happiness of your husband and your children. Do not hesitate between a life of sorrow and bitterness, which you must expect, if you are obstinate, and the prospect of a happy future, in which your children will be recognised by the Emperor and may succeed to crowns. . . . Finally, if you have any consideration for a mother who has always sacrificed herself for her children, you will do it for my sake, also, and I assure you that I shall not forget it as long as I live.[1]

Madame Lucien, however, not unnaturally declined to make the sacrifice demanded of her; she was an excellent wife and a devoted mother, but the prospect of seeing her sons and daughters Imperial Highnesses, and her husband seated upon a throne and engaged, like his brothers and Murat, in perpetual bickering with the Emperor, does not seem to have appealed to her. Nor did Lucien himself prove any more amenable to reason, though *Madame* wrote him the most pathetic letters, and assured him that "his obstinacy would inevitably shorten her days." Finally, Lolotte proved a most disappointing auxiliary and altogether failed to fulfil *Madame's* expectations.

She was a pretty little girl with the Bonaparte features and all the Bonaparte assurance, and

[1] Published by Baron Larrey, *Madame Mère.*

appeared, at first, to impress the Emperor very favourably. But she was devoted to her father and her stepmother, and had come to Paris imbued with all their prejudices, which she was at little pains to conceal. The family were very kind to her, but "she repulsed all their friendly overtures and all their presents, because she heard them speak unkindly of her parents." She declared that she detested Paris and wished to go home, and wept incessantly. She kept a journal, in which she jotted down her impressions of her relatives, and wrote long letters to Italy containing very disrespectful remarks concerning them. The journal was "suppressed," the letters opened in the Post-Office, and copies made of their contents; and one Sunday, after the family dinner, the Emperor produced a number of these epistles, "filled with bitter complaints of the avarice of *Madame* and sarcasms against the uncles and aunts," and proceeded to read them aloud to his astonished relatives, whose indignation appears to have greatly diverted him.

However, he was, in point of fact, exceedingly angry, since the girl's letters reflected but too plainly the sentiments of the household at Canino, and, a few days later, Lolotte, to her great joy, was sent back to her father, to whom her first words were: "Ah! my little papa, you are right in not wishing to go yonder! America would be much preferable; I am sure of it."[1]

[1] Th. Jung, *Lucien Bonaparte et ses Mémoires.*

On July 21, Lucien and his family set sail from Civita Vecchia, on board an American vessel, the *Hercules;* but off the coast of Sardinia were stopped by a British frigate, and conducted to Malta, and thence to England, where they settled down very contentedly near Ludlow.

CHAPTER XXV

Annexation of the Kingdom of Etruria—The hopes of Élisa disappointed—Her intrigues during the interregnum in Tuscany—The Government-General of the Departments of Tuscany erected into a grand dignity of the Empire and conferred upon Élisa, with the title of Grand-Duchess—Her functions—Her arrival at Florence—She makes a progress through her duchy—Organisation of her Court—The Palazzo Pitti—Élisa and the Countess of Albany—The Grand-Duchess chafes at the restraints imposed upon her by the Emperor—Her despotism at Lucca—She visits France for the marriage of the Emperor—Birth of her son, Jérôme Charles—Return to Tuscany—Organisation of a French theatrical troupe—Her lovers—Her amicable relations with her husband—Death of Jérôme Charles—Refusal of Napoleon to permit her to assist at the baptism of the King of Rome.

WE left Élisa at Lucca, very dissatisfied with her lot and convinced that a more spacious stage was essential to enable her to display to the fullest advantage the talents with which she credited herself. Nor was it long before her ambition was realised.

In May 1802, Ludovico I, King of Etruria, had died, leaving an infant son, who was proclaimed king under the name of Ludovico II, while his mother, the Infanta Maria Luisa, became Regent. But the manner in which this princess administered the realm, and, in particular, the singular partiality which she and her

subjects seemed to entertain for the prohibited products of Great Britain and her colonies, greatly displeased Napoleon, and he eventually decided to dispossess the reigning family and annex their dominions to the Kingdom of Italy. On November 11, 1807, he wrote to Eugène de Beauharnais, the Viceroy, to inform him of his intentions, and to direct him "to prepare in secret the necessary measures." A month later, 10,000 French troops, under General Reille, entered Florence by one of the gates, while the Regent retired by another, carrying away with her in her carriage, if we are to believe M. Marmottan, the body of the late King;[1] and the Kingdom of Etruria ceased to exist.

Élisa had been no stranger to this *coup de main*. Tuscany, in point of fact, was the stage on which she aspired to play the rôle denied her at Lucca, and, with this object in view, she had kept a vigilant eye on the conduct of Maria Luisa, and neglected no means to irritate the Emperor against her and precipitate a crisis.[2] Now that the captured throne was vacant, she seems to have imagined that she had only to stretch out her hand to seize it, and was therefore bitterly disappointed when the Emperor declined to view

[1] M. Paul Marmottan, *le Royaume d'Étruria.*

[2] "Tuscany is the focus of the incendiary germs of a blind and perfidious superstition." "It is my duty to inform your Majesty that the guard and the police of the forts of Leghorn have been handed over to Spanish troops. . . . The Court of Palermo seems to have selected Etruria as the centre of its intrigues."

the matter with her eyes and proceeded to cast the former Kingdom of Etruria into the crucible of the Grand Empire, and to impose upon it his codes, prefects, judges, custom-house officers, conscriptions, and all the rest of the Imperial system. However, Napoleon had intimated that, if, after the Tuscans had been purged of those habits of insubordination against his authority which the Bourbon *régime* had engendered—that is to say, after he had moulded the country to his entire satisfaction—they desired his sister to rule them, he would gratify their wishes, at least so far as to constitute the Tuscan departments into a government-general, with residence in Florence, according to the plan which he had recently applied to the Piedmontese departments. In the meanwhile, he named his old comrade General Menou, who had commanded in Egypt after the assassination of Kléber, governor, assisted by a junta of four counsellors.

Élisa, on her side, manœuvred with considerable skill to discredit the new administration, and to induce her brother to confer the government of Tuscany upon her. In July 1808, she requested permission to take up her residence at Florence, where she hoped "to contribute by her zeal and boundless devotion to second the great and liberal views of his Majesty in regard to the arts and sciences." The Emperor does not appear to have taken any notice of this request for some weeks; but when, in September,

Caroline left Paris to join Murat at Naples, he charged her to inform her sister, who intended to meet her at Bologna, that he did not think it advisable that she should establish herself at Florence for the present. Nevertheless, Élisa took advantage of her journey to Bologna, to make a prolonged stay in the Tuscan capital, under the name of the Contessa di Mollione, where she proceeded to ingratiate herself with the principal inhabitants and to intrigue against the Governor-General, Menou.

That functionary had greatly scandalised the Florentine nobility by his ridiculous infatuation for a ballerina named Grassini, who had nothing in common, except the name, with the celebrated artiste who occasionally solaced Napoleon's leisure. This creature was installed in a splendid palace in the Piazza San Marco, which Livia Malfatti, the mistress of the Grand-Duke Peter Leopold, had formerly inhabited; the Imperial box at the Opera was placed at her disposal; she occupied a prominent place at official receptions, and, when she drove out, she was preceded by outriders and escorted by a picket of guards, as though she were a princess. Moreover, the clergy remembered that, while in Egypt, Menou had embraced Mohammedanism and espoused a Turkish lady, and though he had since reverted to his former belief—or unbelief—they resented his interference in ecclesiastical matters; while the reforms which he

instituted, though undoubtedly beneficial, irritated the populace.[1]

Élisa did not fail to profit by the Governor's unpopularity with all classes, and sent, and caused to be sent, highly-coloured reports of his peccadilloes, and the resentment which they were arousing, to the Emperor. At the same time, she took care that his Majesty should be continually receiving, both from Tuscany and from the many influential friends whom she had been at such pains to make in France—Regnaud, Talleyrand, the Laplaces, and the correspondents of the Academy at Lucca—the most flattering testimonies to his sister's abilities.

These adroit manœuvres were crowned with success. On March 2, 1809, a *Senatus consultum* erected the Government-General of the Departments of Tuscany into a grand dignity of the Empire, to be conferred upon a Princess of the Imperial Blood, with the title of Grand-Duchess, and the same titles, rank, and privileges as were enjoyed by the Governor-General of the Departments beyond the Alps. The following day, the Emperor signed, at the Tuileries, two decrees. The first decree conferred upon "our sister the Princesse Élisa, Princess of Lucca and Piombino, the Government-General of the Departments of Tuscany, with the title of Grand-Duchess." The second regulated her functions,

[1] This was especially the case in regard to a decree which prohibited the carrying of secret weapons.

which were assimilated to those exercised by the archduchesses who had formerly governed the Netherlands on behalf of Austria. Thus, although the Grand-Duchess was to exercise supervision over the police, over the execution of the laws relating to the conscription, and over all the civil, military, and administrative authorities, she was to have no power to suspend any orders given by the Ministers in Paris, and, although the general commanding the troops, the Intendant of the Treasury, and the Director of Police—the three functionaries who formed her Council—were forbidden to communicate with their superiors in France, save through the medium of the Grand-Duchess, the Grand-Duchess, in her turn, could not address herself to the Emperor, save through his Ministers.

In short, Élisa received little save the satisfaction to her vanity which she derived from the appearance of authority and the possession of a high-sounding title. Sovereign at Lucca, she was to be nothing in Tuscany but the representative of her brother's will.

She had, however, one compensation for the scanty influence permitted her. At Lucca, if she had governed, it was Baciocchi who reigned. At Florence, she exercised powers in which he was to have no share; nay, he was even subordinated to her, for, having been promoted Imperial Highness and general of division, he was appointed commandant of the troops; and it was his wife

who would transmit to him the orders of the Emperor and the Minister of War.

Élisa lost no time in taking possession of the government which she had so ardently coveted. Indeed, she could not even wait until the preparations for her reception had been completed. But, on the night of March 31–April 1, she arrived secretly at Florence, accompanied only by her husband and the Marchese Lucchesini, and installed herself at the Palazzo Pitti, from which she had already caused poor Menou to be dislodged. The first intimation which the Florentines received that their Grand-Duchess had arrived amongst them was the booming of cannon, which awakened them from their slumbers some hours before their accustomed time for rising. However, all the chief functionaries and the principal citizens hastened to the palace to offer their homage; and when that night Élisa appeared at the Teatro della Pergola, accompanied by her husband and her little daughter, she met with a very flattering reception, though her yellow skin, her black hair, her imperious manner, and her somewhat masculine appearance does not appear to have impressed the audience very favourably.

The following morning, there was a solemn service at the cathedral, and, in the evening, the municipality gave a magnificent ball, at which the Grand-Duchess appeared loaded with jewels and crowned with a diadem, and

danced, we are assured, with much grace, which, as grace was not natural to her, must have required no small effort. A few days later, Élisa set out for a progress through her duchy, visiting Pisa, Leghorn, Volterra, Sienna, and other places, and being everywhere received, if we are to believe her letters to the Emperor, with the utmost enthusiasm, which she adroitly attributes, not to her own merits, but to her near relationship to his Majesty.

On her return to Florence, her first care was the organisation of her Court, which was mounted on an even more pretentious footing than that of Lucca. But here a bitter mortification awaited her; for the Florentine nobility shared, to a large extent, the dislike of the clergy to French rule, and almost all the great ladies whom she invited to join it excused themselves on one pretext or another. Élisa was so incensed that she announced her intention of not residing at the Palazzo Pitti, except during the winter months, and of passing the rest of the year at a charming villa called Il Poggio, situated near the walls, outside the Porta Romana. She did, indeed, spend the summer of 1809 at Il Poggio, where she gave a number of balls and fêtes, though these reunions, we are told, were much less gay than they would have been, if the Grand Duchess, either through ignorance or through disapproval of Italian customs, had not made it her invariable practice to invite husbands and

wives to the same function. "In a land where cicisbeism flourished, this proceeding appeared strange and almost shocking, and had the effect of rendering the receptions which she gave terribly dull and constrained."[1]

Élisa, however, did not carry out her threat of denying the Florentines the light of her countenance during the greater part of the year. The Palazzo Pitti proved too great an attraction. "It requires," she wrote to her brother, "only a glance from the Emperor to become one of the most beautiful palaces which your Majesty possesses"; and, in default of this glance, she spent considerable sums on its embellishment and refurnished it throughout, with the exception of the gallery.[2]

The Grand-Duchess occupied, at first, a small suite of apartments on the entrance floor, which, she pretended, were more to her taste than the spacious rooms on the upper stories. But censorious persons did not fail to take note that these apartments communicated with a neighbouring house which the ex-Queen of Etruria had given to a certain Conte Giucciardini, captain of the palace guards, who was commonly reported to have occupied a very high place in his royal mistress's favour, and that after the count had been induced—or rather compelled—to evacuate

[1] M. Rodocanachi, *Élisa Napoléon en Italie.*

[2] M. Paul Marmottan, *les Arts en Toscane sous Napoléon : la Princesse Élisa.*

this conveniently-situated residence, the Grand-Duchess's handsome equerry, Bartolomeo Cenami, took up his abode there. A little later, however, when Élisa had an increase in her family, she removed to the left wing of the palace, called the Volterrano, where she occupied the whole of the first and second floors.

The dislike with which the new *régime* had been from the first regarded by the Florentine nobility was greatly increased by an incident which occurred during the summer of 1809. The Countess of Albany,[1] widow of Charles Edward Stuart, the Young Pretender, and quasi-widow of the poet Alfieri, had been residing for some years past in Florence, where her palace was the rendezvous of the best and most artistic society in the Tuscan capital. The consideration with which the countess was treated gave great umbrage to Élisa, who saw in her little Court a sort of rival to that of the Palazzo Pitti; and, having learned that she professed the same hostile sentiments towards France which Alfieri had entertained, and that the persons who frequented her salon were wont to express their opinion of the Grand-Duchess with considerable freedom, she obtained an order from the Minister of Police in Paris banishing the lady from the city. This high-handed action was warmly resented by Florentine society, and, from that moment, all

[1] Louisa Maximiliana von Stolberg-Gedern,

hope of Élisa succeeding in disarming its hostility was at an end.

But the hostility of the upper classes was not the only mortification which the Grand-Duchess had to endure. Her haughty and masterful nature chafed incessantly beneath the restrictions to which the Emperor had subjected her. Napoleon, as we have seen, had bestowed upon his sister a new and imposing title, but not a new sovereignty, and, although she was responsible for the good order of Tuscany, all initiative was refused her, and she enjoyed nothing but a kind of right of supervision over the officials whom his Majesty imposed upon her. She was unable to take any step of the smallest importance without informing the Emperor or one of his Ministers; she was forbidden to countermand, or even to suspend, the execution of any order received from Paris, however strongly she might disapprove of it; and a refusal on her part to allow some order sent by Fouché to be executed until it was confirmed by the Emperor brought upon her a scathing reprimand.

"You have the right," wrote Napoleon, "to appeal to me against the decisions of my Ministers, but you have not the right to suspend, in any way, their execution. The Ministers speak in my name; no one has the right to hinder or suspend the execution of the orders which they transmit. . . . There is no authority in France superior to that of a Minister. . . . Even when

my Minister may happen to be in the wrong, I alone am the judge, and you have no right to place any obstacle in his way. You are a subject, like all the French, and you are obliged to obey the orders of the Ministers; for an order of arrest, signed by the Minister of Police, would be quite sufficient to have you arrested, and not only you, but the first Prince of the Blood."

But, if Élisa were a mere puppet of the Imperial will in Tuscany, she was still sovereign in her principalities, and, in revenge apparently for the initiative denied her at Florence, her legislative energy at Lucca was truly amazing. No chief of a progressive party returning to power after long years in the "cold shades of opposition" was ever possessed of such zeal for reform as was her Imperial Highness after a few unprofitable months in the Tuscan capital. In a single session, which opened on February 17, 1810, with an oration pronounced by her complaisant husband, she presented the bewildered Luccans with no less than thirty new laws, dealing with every conceivable subject under heaven, from the reorganisation of the judicature to the cultivation of tobacco, and from the regulation of the rate of interest to the protection of literary property. By this and similar legislative debauches, Élisa flattered herself that she had transformed Lucca into a model state. But it is to be feared that her people would have infinitely preferred the comparative liberty which would have been their lot

under the laws of the Empire to a *régime* under which almost every action in their daily lives was made the subject of elaborate and vexatious enactments, and they were placed at the mercy of the caprices of a woman, "who combined the despotism which she copied from her brother with the despotism natural to her sex."[1]

Early in March, Élisa, notwithstanding that she was five months enceinte, set out for France, in order to be present at the Emperor's marriage. Baciocchi was only permitted to escort her so far as the first post-house, but the fascinating Cenami was, of course, included in her suite, which was a very imposing one, and required seven travelling-carriages to transport it, to say nothing of a considerable baggage-train. On the 17th, she arrived in Paris and established herself at the Petit-Luxembourg, where Laplace, the Chancellor of the Senate, had offered her hospitality, from which however she subsequently removed to the Hôtel Marbeuf. She did not accompany the Emperor to meet his bride at Compiègne, but she was at Saint-Cloud when the new Empress arrived there on the 30th, and assisted at all the ceremonies which followed. Marie Louise does not seem to have been very favourably impressed by her eldest sister-in-law, whose authoritative air and masculine appearance jarred upon her, but she was delighted with the little Princesse Napoléone, whom she overwhelmed with caresses.

[1] M. Frédéric Masson, *Napoléon et sa famille*.

ÉLISA BONAPARTE. GRAND DUCHESS
OF TUSCANY, PRINCESS OF LUCCA
AND PIOMBINO

AFTER A MINIATURE DRAWN IN 1810

"The Grand-Duchess of Tuscany," she wrote to the Emperor of Austria, "is very intelligent. She is ugly, but she has a daughter three years old, who is the most beautiful child I have ever seen."

On July 3, at the Hôtel Marbeuf, Élisa gave birth to a son, who received the names of Jérôme Charles, in honour of the King of Westphalia, who acted as godfather. Next to Lucien, of whom, however, she had seen but little of recent years, Élisa seems to have preferred Jérôme to any of her family, and, although she was far from being of a generous disposition, she had recently lent 50,000 francs to that incorrigible spendthrift, who was perpetually in want of money.

The birth of Jérôme Charles was announced to the Florentines by the discharge of one hundred and one guns, and the child was declared, in conformity with the Constitutions of the principality and the grand-duchy, Hereditary Prince of Lucca and Piombino, and Hereditary Grand-Duke of Tuscany. At Lucca, the auspicious event was celebrated by official rejoicings, presided over by Prince Félix. A *Te Deum* was sung, a hundred young girls were provided with dowries of two hundred francs apiece, alms were distributed among the poor, and a number of prisoners set at liberty.

During her stay in Paris, Élisa was treated with great consideration by the Emperor. "After

four years of difficulties and disappointments," she writes to him, "I have the consolation of seeing that your Majesty does not deem me unworthy of his attention. The greatest of monarchs is willing to interest himself in the destiny of the humblest of women." Nevertheless, although Napoleon made her a present of a portrait of himself, set with diamonds, which had cost 50,000 francs, and gave to each of her ladies-in-waiting Sèvres porcelain to the value of 20,000 francs, he did not, greatly to her disappointment—for her visit cost her over 800,000 francs—dispense a single sou in ready money, and, what was still more vexatious, pressed her for the discharge of the annual indemnity which she had agreed to pay at the time of the cession of Massa, Carrara, and the Garfagnana.

At the beginning of September, she returned to Tuscany, where she found her hands pretty full. A deplorable harvest had raised the price of bread so high, that even the coarsest kind was quite beyond the reach of the poorer classes, and riots were feared at Leghorn and several other towns. Élisa, as a preventive measure, ordered the arrest of "several priests who were fomenting the troubles, and were in possession of arms"; and, at the same time, by regulating the price of bread, put an end to the attempt of certain enterprising financiers to accumulate fortunes at the expense of their unfortunate neighbours; and thus alleviated to some extent the misery which

prevailed. She appears to have anticipated that these services would incline the Emperor to magnanimity in regard to the unpaid indemnity; but his Majesty proved himself a pitiless creditor, and even threatened to annex Carrara and the manufactory which was his sister's pride and joy, if the debt were not speedily liquidated.

In the course of that autumn, Élisa took it into her head to organise a French theatrical troupe, with the idea of promoting the knowledge of the French language in Tuscany, and "of exciting the emulation of the authors of all the States of the Empire, by presenting to them the masterpieces of the French stage." The troupe was to perform six months at Florence, and for the rest of the year at Leghorn, Pisa, and Sienna. So enamoured was she of this project, that, without waiting for the Imperial authorisation, she got together a company for the winter of 1810–11, of which she undertook the supervision herself. Among the names, we find that of Mlle. Clémentine Champmeslé, who was, or claimed to be, a collateral descendant of the famous *tragédienne*, though, as her salary was only 2,370 francs a year, it is to be presumed that she had not inherited much of her talent; a sieur Pompée, who played "*financiers et des rôles annexes*," for a remuneration of 3,752 francs; a sieur Duprat, who, for 3,600 francs, undertook the rôles of "*grands raisonneurs, grands confidants, rôles à récits, secondes pères*," and a Mlle. Lydie Valmont,

whose speciality seems to have been that of "*mère noble*," but who occasionally condescended to utility parts, in consideration of the not very munificent salary of 1,120 francs for the season.

The Grand-Duchess would appear to have ruled her company with a firm hand, and to have been particularly solicitous concerning the virtue of the ladies—certainly, any one who bore the name of Champmeslé required some looking after. Not only were public *liaisons* strictly forbidden them, but the police received instructions from her Highness to keep a vigilant eye on their behaviour, and to intervene immediately if they detected them indulging in any clandestine love-affairs; and, to keep them out of mischief, she compelled them to pass a considerable part of their leisure in studying parts of which there was not the slightest probability of their ever being called upon to play. Nevertheless, the troupe seems to have caused her considerable trouble, and eventually she was glad to transfer its direction to one of her chamberlains.[1]

It is not a little singular that the Grand-Duchess, who was so solicitous about the honour of other women, should have been so indifferent to her own; for her conduct would appear to have furnished her subjects with abundant material for gossip. People spoke of a handsome page, in whom his royal mistress evinced the liveliest interest, until she detected him on his knees

[1] M. E. Rodocanachi, *Élisa Napoléon en Italie.*

before the Contessa di Montecatini, one of the most renowned beauties of Florence, when he was incontinently dismissed from Court and sent to join a marching regiment; of a merchant named Eynard; of a nephew of the Marchese Lucchesini; of the inevitable Cenami; and so very freely of the accomplished Baron de Capelle, Prefect of Leghorn, that the Emperor thought it advisable to transfer him to another sphere of usefulness.

If Élisa had her affairs of the heart, she graciously permitted her consort a like indulgence, of which concession he was not slow to take advantage. Félix did not reside at the Palazzo Pitti, but at the Palazzo della Crocetta, where the Medici, in days gone by, had been wont to lodge distinguished visitors to Florence. Here the Prince kept a little Court of his own, at which a good deal more liberty was permissible than at the Court of the Grand-Duchess; indeed, if we are to believe certain chroniclers of the time, there were occasions when this liberty threatened to degenerate into licence, and to recall the souvenirs of Louis XV and the Parc-aux-Cerfs.[1] To the public eye, however, the august pair presented the edifying spectacle of a most virtuous *ménage*, since, if Élisa were careless of her honour, she was exceedingly solicitous for her reputation. At all public functions they appeared together, and almost

[1] Madame Ida Saint-Elme, *Mémoires.*

every evening visited the theatre, where they sat in the Imperial box, with the charming little Princesse Napoléone between them, and Félix overwhelmed his wife with delicate little attentions.

In the spring of 1811, the Grand-Duchess suffered a severe blow. Towards the middle of April, her infant son, Jérôme Charles, was taken ill at Marlia, and died after an illness of a few days. Élisa announced the sad event to the Emperor in the following letter:

They have just transported me here, in a condition which deprives me at every moment of the use of my senses. My son Jérôme expired on the 17th at Marlia, at five o'clock in the morning, from an illness which appeared at first to be merely the consequences of teething, but which has been recognised as a dropsy of the brain. On the child's head being opened, it was found to contain ten ounces of water. The Prince of Lucca [Baciocchi], who is in a terrible state, was to have informed your Majesty an hour after the death. I beg your Majesty to pardon me if I did not write myself, but I am in such a prostrate condition that I could not hold a pen.

I recommend myself to the powerful protection of your Majesty.

I am, with profound respect, Sire,

Your Imperial and Royal Majesty's

most devoted and submissive sister,

Élisa

Poggio-à-Cajano, 19 April, 1811.[1]

[1] Archives Nationales, published by M. Rodocanachi.

The body of the little prince was taken to Lucca, and buried in the Church of San Paolino, whither, some three months later, Élisa caused the remains of her eldest son, the little Félix Napoléon, who had died, in 1798, at Marseilles, to be transferred.

The Grand-Duchess, who, with all her faults, was an affectionate mother, seems to have felt her child's death acutely. Her physicians recommended her change of air and scene, and she solicited the Emperor's permission to come to Paris, where she informed him that she "hoped to find in the bosom of her family, assembled for the baptism of the King of Rome, some consolation for the sorrow which had recently overwhelmed her." Napoleon, however, declined to authorise her leaving Italy, and advised a course of sea-bathing at Leghorn. It is not improbable that he was actuated by motives of superstition, and feared that the presence at the baptism of a person who had just lost her own son might bring ill-fortune upon his heir.

CHAPTER XXVI

Enviable position of Pauline—Her luxury and extravagance—Her treatment of her husband—Pauline and Marie Louise—Magnificent fête given by the princess to their Majesties at Neuilly—Unfavourable impression which this lavish expenditure makes upon the Parisians—The fête is repeated for their benefit—Pauline accompanies her mother to Aix-la-Chapelle and Spa—MM. de Canouville and de Septeuil—Unfortunate consequences to the former of loving the princess too much, and to the latter of not loving her enough.

PAULINE, on her return from Aix-la-Chapelle, in October 1809, found herself in a truly enviable position. Thanks to the readjustment of her revenues, of which we have spoken in a previous chapter, she was now in possession of an immense income, over which her husband exercised no control whatever. She had one of the finest hôtels in Paris and one of the most charming country-estates in France. Finally, she had not only obtained permission to remain permanently in France, but she had, to all intents and purposes, got rid of her husband, since his official duties at Turin precluded him from paying more than occasional visits to France.

For the first time, perhaps, since her second marriage, she felt thoroughly satisfied with her-

self and all the world, and the luxury and magnificence she displayed and the way she squandered money on every conceivable caprice were things to marvel at—or to weep over. *Madame Mère*, we may be sure, shed many a tear over her extravagance, which must have seemed to her almost criminal. But her lamentations were of no avail, for, though Pauline was much attached to her mother, the good lady had never had the smallest influence over her. Besides, she could always reply, that, if the Emperor gave generously to his family, he intended them to dispense generously. To which *Madame*, who hoarded every possible franc of her own pension, must have been hard put for a rejoinder.[1]

And, assuredly, the *couturières* and modistes of the Rue Saint-Honoré and the Rue de Richelieu, the jewellers of the Quai des Orfèvres and the Palais-Royal, and all who ministered to the vanity and extravagance of woman, to say nothing of the horde of humbler tradesmen whose carts and vans crowded each day the courtyard of the Hôtel Charost, would have been well pleased to see, not one, but a score of Paulines in their midst. The princess's House-

[1] At times, however, Pauline showed, in the midst of her extravagance, a glimpse of her mother's parsimonious nature. Thus, on one occasion, when a certain man-milliner respectfully begged for a settlement of his account, on the plea that he was urgently pressed for money, she instructed her Intendant "to take advantage of his need of money to make him accept some reduction in his account."

hold, which numbered, including the staff of her stables and those employed at Neuilly, more than eighty persons,—for she had brought from Turin the greater part of her Piedmontese Household,—drew in salaries and wages nearly 160,000 francs, while their maintenance cost more than as much again. In a single year, Pauline expended 180,000 francs on her toilette; 250,356 francs on jewellery[1]—for, though she had the famous Borghese diamonds at her disposal, and had received some magnificent jewels from her husband and the Emperor, she was continually adding to the collection—54,000 francs on the upkeep of her stables, exclusive of the purchase of horses and carriages; and 50,000 francs on entertaining.[2]

Borghese arrived in Paris for the Emperor's marriage, and met with a very cold reception from his consort. The princess's first act was to inform him of the Emperor's decision separating her revenues from his, and that, in consequence, she should expect him to defray the entire expense of his visit; and, to leave him no choice in the matter, she declined to receive any of his suite into the Hôtel Charost, on the plea of insufficient accommodation. Though she condescended to permit him to occupy a suite of apartments above her own, she sent several times to complain that the noise he made in moving

[1] This was the account of one jeweller alone, Devoix of the Quai des Orfèvres. The most costly item was "*un collier de trente-quatre brillants chatons montés à cage*, 135,000 francs."

[2] M. Frédéric Masson, *Napoléon et sa famille*.

about was affecting her nerves, and though she lent him a carriage until his own arrived from Turin, it was with the worst possible grace. She further gave him to understand that, if he wished to see her, he must send one of his people to inquire when it would be convenient for the princess to receive him; and this happened so rarely, that when, one day, at his *lever*, the Emperor inquired after his sister's health, Borghese replied that he was really unable to inform his Majesty, since, although he resided under the same roof, he had not seen her for nearly a week. Finally, when he sent his wife a note inscribed to "la Princesse Borghèse," the lady caused him to be informed that she should refuse to receive such communications, and that letters intended for her must be addressed: "Son Altesse Impériale la Princesse Pauline, Duchesse de Guastalla."

Subsequently, in obedience to the Emperor's orders, an official reconciliation took place, and the ill-mated couple occasionally appeared in public together. One day, during this conjugal truce, Pauline and her husband were returning from Neuilly, when the horses attached to their carriage bolted, and were only stopped on the very brink of the Seine. This incident greatly diverted the Parisians, who remarked that it would indeed have been piquant if two persons who found it so difficult to live together should have chosen to die together.

The untrustworthy compiler of the *Mémoires* of Fouché, whose evidence still appears to be regarded by a certain class of historians as worthy of serious consideration, asserts that Pauline was bitterly opposed to the Emperor's marriage with Marie Louise and regarded her sister-in-law with jealousy and dislike. But, if such were the case, it is not a little singular that she should have taken so much trouble to make her august brother appear at his best when he presented himself before his bride, selecting his clothes, his cravats, and his shoes, designing for him a most gorgeous coat all covered with gold embroidery for the marriage ceremony,—which, however, the Emperor found so inconvenient that he only wore it on one occasion[1]—and making heroic, if unsuccessful, attempts to teach him how to waltz.

As a matter of fact, Pauline's attitude towards the new Empress seems to have been one of contemptuous tolerance. Joséphine, though far inferior to Pauline in physical attractions, had been her equal, if not her superior, in grace and elegance, and this rivalry had undoubtedly intensified the hatred which the princess had borne her sister-in-law. But her successor not only possessed no pretensions to beauty—if we except the Austrian lip and a healthy complexion—but she was entirely destitute of any of those qualities in which Joséphine had been pre-eminent. How

[1] Méneval, *Mémoires.*

could Pauline, whose admirers were like the stars in heaven for multitude, be jealous of so commonplace a young woman?

As for other motives of dislike, the princess had already obtained from the Emperor as much —or almost as much—money as she required, and, since, unlike her sisters, she had no political ends to serve, the influence which the Empress might exercise over her husband's mind was a matter of indifference to her.[1]

Of the many superb fêtes in honour of the Emperor's marriage, one of the most splendid was that given by Pauline at Neuilly, which was graced by the attendance of both their Majesties, and of which Stanislas de Girardin, who was present, has left us an interesting description:

"This fête began at nine o'clock in the evening, with a vaudeville, entitled *la Danse interrompue;* but many of the persons who had received invitations were unable to assist, because the *salle* was too small. At the conclusion of the play, their Majesties entered the gardens, which were illuminated by coloured lights, which produced a most dazzling effect. Various surprises had been ingeniously contrived and tactfully arranged. The first which presented itself was

[1] The story related in the Fouché *Mémoires* of Pauline making vulgar derisive gestures behind Marie Louise's back at Brussels, in the spring of 1810, and of her being detected by the Emperor and banished for a time from Court, though reproduced by her biographers, M. Turquan and M. d'Almeras, appears to be quite unfounded. The princess did not accompany their Majesties to Brussels in 1810.

the appearance of groups and statues coming to life, quitting their pedestals, forming dances, and scattering flowers in their Majesties' path; and conducting them to the Temple of Hymen, to a village fête, and to a palace, which was the exact imitation of Schönbrunn. Orchestras placed at regular intervals regaled the ear with heavenly music and delightful airs. This magical promenade, in which all the wonders of fairyland claimed one's attention, lasted half an hour. The Emperor, on his return to the apartments, which were decorated with extraordinary sumptuousness, set alight to a 'dragon,' which was the signal for a superb display of fireworks, in the midst of which Signora Saqui mounted upon a tight-rope at a prodigious height.[1] The ball began about midnight."[2]

But if these costly manifestations of official joy were gratifying to the Emperor's vanity, the public, perhaps because it regretted Joséphine, appears to have regarded them with disapproval, "and could not prevent itself from indulging in sad and serious reflections, when it considered

[1] This female Blondin was then at the height of her reputation, and her performance was included in the programme by special request of the Emperor.

[2] *Journal et Souvenirs.* Other writers speak of "a balloon dressed with French and Austrian flags and decorated with flowers, which raised into the air, in an allegorical car, ladies selected by her Imperial Highness to present flowers to their Majesties"; of a "detonating balloon, from which a Venus descended into the park by the aid of a parachute"; and of other wonders.

that the contributions paid in the course of a year by several provinces were squandered in a few hours."[1] Napoleon, who attached great importance to public opinion, and who was always particularly careful to avoid giving offence to the susceptibilities of the Parisians, when informed by the police of the unfortunate impression produced by the festivities at Neuilly, endeavoured to disarm the popular discontent by ordering his sister to give a second fête, exclusively for the benefit of the Parisian bourgeoisie, among whom no less than five thousand tickets were distributed. Her Imperial Highness obeyed, but with a very bad grace, for she entertained the most sovereign contempt for the good citizens of Paris, and, although she opened her gardens, she kept her salons closed, and moreover omitted to provide her unwelcome guests with anything but the lightest of refreshments. In consequence, the second fête was far from securing the result which the Emperor anticipated; and the worthy citizens and their wives went away grumbling that "the Court had given them its leavings," and said very hard things about Princess Pauline. Nevertheless, in spite of the parsimonious manner in which the entertainment was carried out, the two fêtes cost Pauline close upon 100,000 francs.

A few days later, her Highness set out for Aix-la-Chapelle to join her mother; the pretext being, as usual, her health; the true motive, to

[1] Stanislas de Girardin, *Journal et Souvenirs.*

free herself from Borghese, who, notwithstanding frequent intimations from his consort that his absence was infinitely more endurable than his society, continued to hover about her in the most exasperating manner.

At Aix, whither the greater part of her Household accompanied her, Pauline, whose recuperative powers seem to have been truly amazing, was the leading spirit in all the festivities. Nevertheless, she soon grew tired of the place and dragged her mother off to Spa, which offered her a wider choice of amusements—and admirers. It must be confessed, however, that in the midst of her frivolities, and of much that deserves a harsher name, she appears to have found leisure to be a very attentive daughter, in return for which *Madame* no doubt found it occasionally convenient to be a trifle blind.

Pauline returned to France for the fêtes and celebrations of the Emperor's birthday, and lost no time in surrendering herself to the joys of yet another *grande passion.* Let it not be supposed, however, that in the eighteen months which had elapsed since the flight of the timid Blangini from Turin—he was now, by the way, *Kapellmeister* to brother Jérôme at Cassel, and meditating his *Fée Urgèle,* the work which is perhaps his best title to remembrance—Pauline had experienced any difficulty in filling the vacant place in her affections. There was a certain M. Achille du Cormier, who, previous to the

PAULINE BONAPARTE, PRINCESS BORGHESE

FROM THE PAINTING BY MADAME LEBRUN AT VERSAILLES

departure of her Imperial Highness for Aix-la-Chapelle, enjoyed the distinction of having his name pretty frequently coupled with hers, and, if rumour does not lie, he was not the only worshipper to whose vows the lady consented to lend a benevolent ear.

But M. du Cormier and his coadjutors speedily found themselves relegated to oblivion, when Armand Jules Élisabeth de Canouville, major in the 16th Dragoons and aide-de-camp to Berthier, Prince de Neufchâtel, appeared upon the scene. Never was there a more dashing warrior, or one more calculated to captivate a great lady's heart. For Armand Jules Élisabeth was no plebeian swashbuckler; he was a man of good family, of education, of refinement, as much at home in a ball-room as on the battlefield, in the boudoir as in the bivouac, an accomplished dancer, a maker of verses, a consummate dandy, one of the most distinguished of that band of aristocrats who perpetuated, in the midst of the democratic army of the Revolution, the gay and chivalrous traditions of the perfumed and bewigged warriors who fought under the Great Condé, Vendôme, and Maurice de Saxe, when the trenches were opened to the sound of violins, and the enemy was invited, with a courteous salute, to fire the first shots.

Many anecdotes are related of his *liaison* with Pauline, for, as the lady was never at much pains to conceal her preferences, while discretion was

not one of M. de Canouville's virtues, their relations were soon public property. Perhaps the most amusing is that of the gallant dragoon submitting to the extraction of a perfectly sound tooth at the hands of the dentist Bousquet, in order to give his inamorata courage to support a similar operation, and of Bousquet, who inferred, from the familiar and affectionate terms on which he appeared to be with the princess, that he must certainly be her husband, subsequently expressing his opinion that the stories current about the Prince and Princess Borghese were entirely false, since he had just witnessed his Highness give a most touching proof of conjugal devotion.

However, after the affair had been in progress some three months, it came to the Emperor's ears. That it had not reached them earlier was no doubt due to the excellent understanding which always seems to have existed between his Majesty's sisters and the chiefs of the police, who were supposed to keep a watchful eye on the behaviour of the different members of the Imperial Family and to render a faithful account thereof to their master. The story goes that Napoleon, having given his favourite sister one of three magnificent sable-pelisses with which the Czar had presented him at the Erfurt Conference, two years before, the princess, in her turn, bestowed it upon her admirer, adding thereto some diamond buttons, likewise the gift of his Majesty. Canouville wore this sumptuous *gage d'amour* at a

review at Fontainebleau, where the Court then was; but, as ill luck would have it, the horse which he was riding became restive, and backed against the quarters of the Emperor's charger, Napoleon, turning angrily in his saddle to see who was the offender, recognised the pelisse and the buttons, drew his own conclusions as to how M. de Canouville had come by them, and promptly instructed Berthier to despatch his fascinating aide-de-camp on a mission to the Army of Portugal.

Since there is no official record of Napoleon having held any review during the residence of the Court at Fontainebleau in the autumn of 1810, it is doubtful if there is any truth in this anecdote. But what is certain, is that, on November 7, Pauline suddenly quitted Fontainebleau and returned to Paris, although the Hôtel Charost was in the hands of painters and decorators, and no preparations had been made for her reception; that, two days later, the Emperor wrote to Berthier, instructing him to send one of his aides-de-camp to Spain, "with orders not to return without news of the Army of Portugal," and that the officer selected for this service was Canouville.

Pauline was in despair at her lover's departure, but derived some consolation from the gallant officer's promise to return to her side without an hour's unnecessary delay. That same night, he left Paris with despatches for Masséna, and rode

ventre-à-terre all the way to Salamanca, where he presented himself at Junot's quarters covered with mud from head to heel and with a several days' growth of beard, and related to the Duchesse d'Abrantès and to General Thiébault, who was with her, the story of his adventurous journey and the romance which it had so cruelly interrupted.[1]

Having ascertained that there was no possibility at present of communicating with the Army of Portugal, and that no one could say how long he might have to wait to deliver his despatches into Masséna's hands, he decided to entrust them to Junot and, after a night at Salamanca, started on his return to Paris, and traversed the six or seven hundred miles which lay between him and the object of his devotion with even greater precipitation than he had accomplished the first part of the journey. But what was his despair on reporting himself to Berthier, to receive a severe reprimand for having returned without executing the mission with which he had been charged, and a peremptory order to start again for Salamanca without an hour's delay, and remain there until communications with the Army of Portugal had been re-established!

Sadly did the hapless gallant wend his weary way back to Salamanca, where he was presently joined by a companion in misfortune, one Achille Torteuil de Septeuil by name, who was also an

[1] Duchesse d'Abrantès, *Mémoires;* General Thiébault, *Mémoires.*

aide-de-camp of the Prince de Neufchâtel.[1] And observe the irony of Fate! M. de Canouville had been exiled, because he loved Pauline too much; M. de Septeuil, because he did not love her enough.

Weary of waiting for the return of her adorer, the fickle princess had cast a benevolent eye upon M. Septeuil—a handsome lad of twenty-three—and given him to understand that if he cared to console her for his comrade's absence, she would graciously permit him to do so. But, *mirabile dictu!* M. de Septeuil declined the honour which her Imperial Highness proposed to confer upon him; the reason being that his affections were already engaged. He loved with all the ardour of his twenty-three years the beautiful Madame de Barral, Pauline's lady-in-waiting. Madame de Barral had up to that moment been one of the princess's most cherished friends; indeed, her Highness had only recently given the lady a proof of her attachment by disembarrassing her of an elderly and jealous husband, whom she persuaded Jérôme to appoint one of his chamberlains at Cassel. But a woman scorned, the poet tells us, is pitiless as Fate, and the thought that her lady-in-waiting should presume to dispute with her the devotion of any one was an offence which nothing could condone.

[1] "Le seul état-major du Prince Berthier pouvait à lui seul à passer pour harem capable de servir aux caprices de dix sultanes." —Thiébault, *Mémoires*.

Accordingly, she informed the Emperor that M. de Septeuil's attentions to Madame de Barral were causing a serious scandal, which it was impossible for her to tolerate any longer, and begged him to interfere.

Now, his Majesty, as his sister was doubtless aware, had a grievance of his own against Madame de Barral, who, some time before, had rejected the Imperial advances, and this was not calculated to dispose him to view the matter from an altogether impartial standpoint. The consequence was that Madame de Barral not only lost her place in the princess's Household, but was exiled to her husband's country-seat, while Septeuil was sent to Salamanca, with orders to join Masséna so soon as the whereabouts of that elusive general should be located. At Fuentes d'Onoro, charging valiantly upon one of the British squares, he received a bullet in the leg, which necessitated its amputation on the battle-field, and his retirement from the service.[1] Notwithstanding this disfigurement, however, he retained the affections of Madame de Barral, for when, soon afterwards, that lady succeeded in obtaining a divorce from her elderly husband, she promptly married her youthful lover.

As for Canouville, we shall have occasion to speak of him again.

[1] Marbot, *Mémoires.*

CHAPTER XXVII

Arrival of Murat at Naples—His reception—He is joined by Caroline—Difficulties with which he has to contend—Auspicious commencement of his reign—Differences with the Emperor—Murat and Caroline compromised in the conspiracy of Fouché and Talleyrand—Cause of Napoleon's forbearance—Temporary reconciliation between Murat and the Emperor—Caroline, disappointed in her hope of being admitted to a share in the government, endeavours to obtain influence by indirect means—Her *liaisons* with Paul de la Vauguyon and Daure—Salicetti and Maghella—Semi-disgrace of Caroline—Opposition of Murat to the Austrian marriage—Caroline and Marie Louise—The train of the Empress's mantle once more the subject of dissension—*Madame* counsels her daughters and daughters-in-law to obey the Emperor—Caroline betrays Madame Junot's *liaison* with Metternich to Junot—Quarrel between the Emperor and Murat—Return of the latter to Naples—Failure of the expedition against Sicily.

AS the reign of Murat was not to begin officially until August 1, 1808, and his health was still far from re-established, he was in no hurry to leave France. From Barèges he went to Cauterets for a new cure; then, to spend a few days with Lannes, at the Château de Bouilles, near Lectoure, and, early in August, joined his wife in Paris. Towards the middle of the month, however, he received orders from the Emperor to proceed to Naples without further delay; and, on the 22nd, he quitted Paris, leaving Caroline behind to wind up their private affairs. As a mark

of the confidence he reposed in his subjects, he had sent his children on in advance, and this had a very good effect upon the Neapolitans.

After a short stay at Milan, as the guest of the Viceroy of Italy, Eugène de Beauharnais, and another at Rome, where he was received by General Miollis and all the French garrison under arms, Murat entered his capital on September 6, accompanied only by his aide-de-camp, Paul de la Vauguyon. He was on horseback, and wore his general's uniform, without any of the insignia of royalty. Under a triumphal arch which had been erected on the Piazza di Foria, he received the homage of his subjects, after which, escorted by an immense crowd, he proceeded to the Church of the Spirito Santo to assist at a *Te Deum*.

Murat, with his handsome, good-humoured face, his fine presence, his martial bearing, and his affable manners, created a most favourable impression; the Neapolitans, ready to be enthusiastic over every novelty, like true children of the South, vowed that he looked every inch a king—which, indeed, he did—and acclaimed him rapturously whenever he appeared in public; and when, on September 25, Caroline arrived, all smiles and condescension, the popular enthusiasm knew no bounds. Never had one seen a handsomer royal couple; never had royal couple aroused such demonstrations of loyalty or acquired so speedy a popularity!

The Palazzo Reale, in which the new sovereigns took up their residence, was delightfully situated, on the east side of what is now the Piazza del Plebiscito, close to the sea. From the windows of her bedchamber the Queen could enjoy what is perhaps the most magnificent panorama in the whole world. In the furnishing of this room, Caroline had displayed great magnificence, combined with excellent taste. It was hung and upholstered entirely in white satin, which harmonised with the dazzling complexion of its mistress, while the bed-curtains were of richly worked tulle lined with pink satin. Caroline spent a great deal of her time in her bed-chamber, where she received, before rising for the day, as she had been in the habit of doing at the Elysée, all persons whom she admitted to the honour of her friendship.[1] Reclining on the broad pillows of her sumptuous couch, in a camisole of English lace, with a coquettish little lace-cap on her head, she made a charming picture—and she was well aware of it.

The flattering reception which Murat had met with on his arrival at Naples scarcely consoled him for the very unsatisfactory condition in which he found his kingdom. Joseph had invited to follow him to Spain the generals and superior officers of the Army and a great part of the Royal Guard. He had likewise engaged the

[1] Madame Lenormant, *Souvenirs et Correspondance de Madame Récamier.*

services of most of the Ministers and Government officials, whom it would be far from easy to replace; the Crown Treasury was empty; the State Treasury very nearly so; commerce was being ruined by the struggle with England and the Continental Blockade; while, under the late King's feeble rule, brigandage had become a most flourishing industry. In short, Murat found himself beset by difficulties on every side.

Nevertheless, the new reign opened far more auspiciously than could possibly have been anticipated. Murat summoned to Naples his friend and confidant Agar, who had acted as administrator of the Duchies of Berg and Clèves, and entrusted him with the control of both the public and the royal revenues, with the result that they were soon placed on a much more satisfactory footing; while an old comrade of the Egyptian expedition, the commissary Daure, was charged with the portfolios of War and the Marine, and succeeded in infusing some vigour into both services. The Isle of Capri, which had been held by the English since its capture by Sir Sidney Smith in the summer of 1806, was attacked and retaken, after a gallant defence by Colonel (afterwards Sir Hudson) Lowe and his "Corsican Rangers" (October 1808). Energetic measures were undertaken against the brigands of Calabria and the Abruzzi, who were eventually almost exterminated. Feudal laws were abolished and the land system assimilated to that of the

other satellite States of the Empire; important reforms were introduced into the judicature; schools and colleges founded; agriculture and manufactures protected, and several important public works begun. In short, Murat, greedy of popularity, and also sincerely desirous of being a good king, showed from the first that he was anxious to gain the affection of his subjects, and intended to govern his realm in accordance with their interests.

But Napoleon did not wish Naples governed in the interests of the Neapolitans; he wished it to be governed in the interests of France. In giving kingdoms to the members of his family, he had intended to regard them merely as prefects, with a more sonorous title and a more extensive administration; to allow them to become national kings would be, in his opinion, to strike at the very roots of the Imperial system. He therefore strongly disapproved of the course his brother-in-law was pursuing, and the reprimands which he continually addressed to him deeply mortified the new King. He blamed Murat severely for having pardoned and recalled certain partisans of the Bourbons and restored to them their property; he accused him of "emasculating the Code Napoléon," of flattering the clergy, of distributing decorations too freely, of having "*fait des singeries pour Saint-Janvier* [the national saint]."[1]

[1] After the taking of Capri, Murat, "wishing to give a proof of his special protection to the protector of his capital," endowed the

"I am grieved to see how little you are aware of what you owe to me," he writes. ". . . You are sacrificing yourself to a false popularity. . . . You must surely be out of your senses"; and so forth.

Nor did he confine himself to reprimands and reproaches. He refused to allow any reduction of the Neapolitan debt; he demanded the immediate payment of the sums due for the maintenance of the French troops, even those which dated back to the early months of Joseph's reign; he threatened to confiscate to his own profit the sequestrated estates of King Ferdinand's partisans, if any were restored to their former owners, and he forbade any Frenchman to enter Murat's service without his express permission. "I am no longer anything in your eyes but a man who is barely tolerated," wrote Murat, "and whom people have known how to render suspect."

M. Masson attributes the Emperor's harsh treatment of his brother-in-law to certain intrigues which he had discovered that Murat and Caroline were carrying on with Talleyrand and Fouché, and which, in the opinion of many historians, were the real motive of Napoleon's hurried return from Spain in January 1809.

The knowledge that the Emperor would be incurring grave personal risks in a country where

chapel which contained the shrine of St. Gennaro with an annual sum of 2,600 ducats, decorated its clergy with gold medals, on which were engraven the effigy of the saint, and repaired thither in state, and, with his own hands, deposited a golden sun enriched with precious stones upon the altar.

exasperated patriots lurked behind every rock and thicket, and that he might very well lose there his life and his crown, had brought about a *rapprochement* between the Grand Chamberlain and the Minister of Police, so long at enmity, with the idea of making themselves masters of the succession to the Imperial throne. The candidate of their choice was Murat, whom they knew would be acceptable to Paris, the Army, the people, and the Senate, and whom they hoped to govern as they pleased. Murat and Caroline, informed of these hopes and projects, did not disavow them, and, if we are to believe Pasquier, Fouché had actually arranged for relays of horses to be in readiness on the road between Naples and Paris, in order that, in the event of the Emperor's death, Murat might be brought on the scene with the least possible delay. According to the same chronicler, a letter from one of the conspirators to the King of Naples was intercepted by Eugène de Beauharnais, warned by Napoleon's old aide-de-camp Lavalette, who was then at the head of the Post Office, and this letter, sent to the Emperor in Spain, brought him hastening back to Paris as fast as horses could travel.[1]

On the other hand, Murat's latest biographers, MM. Chavanon and Saint-Yves, point out that the most severe of the letters addressed by the Emperor to his brother-in-law are anterior to the

[1] Pasquier, *Mémoires*. See also M. Madelin's *Fouché*, Vol. II.

rapprochement between Fouché and Talleyrand, which dates only from the beginning of December 1808: "Although it cannot be doubted that Murat lent a complaisant ear to the propositions of the two Ministers, Napoleon had not waited for this intrigue to wound the vanity of his brother-in-law. He could have done nothing more calculated to alienate and even to predispose to treason a man so full of pride."[1]

That the Emperor took no steps to visit his displeasure upon Murat, and appeared disposed to accept the assurances "of his absolute devotion and of his entire submission," which the latter, on learning of "the suspicions which had arisen against him in the heart of his Imperial Majesty," hastened to send him, was due to two reasons. In the first place, he could not punish him without punishing Caroline, and, though she was probably as much compromised as her husband, his affection for her made him reluctant to treat her with severity. In the second, the approaching war with Austria left him little leisure to engage in quarrels with members of his family, and, moreover, he needed Murat's assistance in the solution of the Roman Question, which the continued refusal of Pius VII to commit himself to the Continental System and involve himself in war with England had brought to an acute stage.

The tension of the last few months in the re-

[1] MM. Chavanon and Saint-Yves, *Joachim Murat.*

lations between the two brothers-in-law was now followed by a temporary reconciliation, and when, on May 17, 1809, Napoleon issued, from the Palace of Schönbrunn, the decree uniting the States of the Church—or rather that part of them which he had spared the previous year—to the French Empire, the French troops which occupied Papal territory were attached to the Army of Naples and placed under the command of Murat.

The constant interference of the Emperor was not the only obstacle which Murat had to encounter in the government of his kingdom. Caroline had come to Naples in the persuasion that she would be "officially admitted to the Government, like Caroline of Austria." In the decree of investiture, it had been stated that it was to her that her husband owed his crown, and the accession had been assured to her. Moreover, in the very probable event of Napoleon requiring the King's services in the field, she would undoubtedly be appointed Regent, for the Emperor, in offering his brother-in-law a throne, had not failed to indicate that such was his desire. "With a wife like yours," he had written, "you can absent yourself, if war calls you back to my side. She is very capable of being at the head of a regency."[1] The Queen therefore confidently counted on being consulted by her husband in all affairs of importance, and on being admitted

[1] See page 138, *supra*.

to the Council of State, and her indignation may be imagined when she found that his Majesty did not share her views. Intensely vain by nature, Murat's amazing good-fortune, which had brought him, in the course of a dozen years, from the head of a regiment to the head of a kingdom, had completely turned his head, and if he had hitherto permitted himself to be guided by his wife, and, indeed, been only too ready to seek her counsel, he now refused to do so any longer. Indeed, the mere suspicion that people could believe him to be under her influence irritated him to the last degree. She had not been associated with him in the government of Berg and Clèves, why, he asked, should she participate in the government of Naples? The very suggestion was an insult; it was to invite Europe to regard him as a second Baciocchi!

He would have done better to humour his ambitious consort. The Queen was bitterly mortified, and her chagrin was increased when she compared her position in Naples with that of Élisa at Florence. "'Scenes' between the royal couple were of frequent occurrence, and, though, as Murat still cherished for Caroline much of his old affection, while her Majesty, on her side, perceived that she had nothing to gain by an open rupture, they ended in reconciliations, the atmosphere of the palace was decidedly stormy."

However, Caroline Bonaparte was a young woman of infinite resource, and, finding that she

was not to be allowed to exercise any political influence directly, she resolved to exercise it by indirect means. We have seen that in Paris she had succeeded in establishing intimate relations with several prominent men. Her connections with Fouché, Talleyrand, and Maret, had, of course, been purely political, based upon the desire for reciprocal favours; but in those with Junot and Metternich, though ambition had been Caroline's chief consideration, the soldier and the diplomatist had been influenced by more tender sentiments, which had enabled her to attach them to her interests far more closely than either of the Ministers.

Having thus learned, by personal experience, that love may become a very potent factor in the game of politics, her Majesty began to cast about her for some one upon whom it might be worth her while to exercise her fascinations, and selected as her first victim M. de la Vauguyon, her husband's favourite aide-de-camp. M. de la Vauguyon was a grandson of that meddlesome old gentleman who had been *gouverneur* to Louis XVI when Dauphin, and used to listen at keyholes to conversations between him and Marie Antoinette. After serving in Spain, in a corps of *émigrés* organised by the Marquis de Saint-Simon, he had, soon after the establishment of the Empire, made his peace with the Government, returned to France, and taken service in the Army. Here he attracted the

notice of Murat, who appointed him his aide-de-camp and conceived for him a warm affection. He was, at this time, about thirty years of age, handsome, tall, and well made, with the grand manner of the old Court. But it was not on account of these advantages that Caroline singled him out, but because he enjoyed the full confidence of the King and, being vain and empty-headed, promised to become an easy prey. Nor did her hopes fail to materialise, and whenever M. de la Vauguyon availed himself of her Majesty's gracious invitation to view the effects of moonlight on the Bay of Naples from the windows of her apartments—which he seems to have done pretty frequently—Caroline generally contrived to worm out of him the substance of his conversations with Murat during the day.

Encouraged by this success, Caroline turned her guns on the Minister Daure, and speedily compelled him to capitulate also. The ex-commissary was a far less engaging personage than the aide-de-camp: "ugly, short, thick-set, plebeian, with detestable manners, which indicated low companions, particularly among women." But then he was an important man, holding two portfolios,—War and the Marine,—and that atoned for everything.

Her Majesty was less successful in an attempt to attach to her interests that veteran intriguer, the Corsican Salicetti, whom Joseph Bonaparte had appointed Minister of Police at Naples, and

who had been confirmed in his office by the new King. Salicetti, having known his fair countrywoman since she was a child, and being, besides, a gentleman of quite exceptional astuteness, was disinclined to commit himself very far, and a mission which the Emperor confided to him at Rome removed him beyond the reach of temptation.

It was, of course, Salicetti's duty to warn Murat of the manœuvres of his consort; but his old friendship with the Bonapartes, and the reflection that his own conduct might perhaps be liable to misinterpretation, sealed his lips. However, there was by his side a Genoese named Maghella, who had played an important part in the revolutions of Liguria, and had been Minister of Police in that republic before its incorporation with the kingdom of Italy. On Murat's accession, apparently on Salicetti's suggestion, he had been invited to Naples, where he became Prefect of Police and very soon the rival of his chief and former patron. This Maghella, who was a little later to exercise a great and very unfortunate influence over the King, anxious to ingratiate himself with his master, kept a watchful eye on Caroline's actions, and, early in May 1809, informed Murat that she was in the habit of holding secret conferences with the Ministers.

His Majesty's indignation was intense, and Caroline found herself in a kind of semi-disgrace, which is described by the French Am-

bassador, Durand, in a despatch to the Minister for Foreign Affairs in Paris:

"We are unable to pay our court to her [the Queen], except for a moment on Mondays only. The King has exacted this, and he intends to isolate the Queen more every day. Such is the restraint to which she is subjected that she cannot even invite a woman to breakfast. It appears that the mania of the King is an overwhelming dread of appearing to be led by any one, but particularly by the Queen. He often repeats this phrase, that he is led by no one. He applies it to other persons besides the Queen. The Queen cannot recommend any matter or any individual to the Ministers; the request is always refused. This distrust and misunderstanding in political matters is so much the more extraordinary, since one cannot fail to perceive that, as husband and wife, the King and Queen are on very good terms, that is to say, the King has no mistress, and has not, up to the present, abandoned himself to any fixed attachment."

And the Ambassador adds:

"It is by order of the Queen that I have written your Excellency on a matter so delicate, and my despatch has not been transcribed until after having been read by the Queen."[1]

This despatch was, of course, placed under the Emperor's eyes; but, if Caroline had anticipated that her brother would intervene on her behalf, she was doomed to disappointment. Napoleon

[1] Published by M. Frédéric Masson, *Napoléon et sa famille*.

had too much need of Murat's services at that moment to estrange him by espousing his wife's cause; and, if the Ambassador had written under the dictation of the Queen, some other agent may have sent him a different account of the affair. He therefore made no sign, and, after a while, the restrictions which had been imposed on Caroline were withdrawn, and a better understanding seemed to be established between husband and wife. Nevertheless, the Queen's intrigues, and the King's vigorous assertion of his intention to refuse her any political influence, had sown the seed of much future trouble, and brought into existence at the Neapolitan Court two parties: an Italian party, which urged Murat to govern as a national king, for the Neapolitans and with the Neapolitans—a course which, however much it may have accorded with reason and right, was certain to bring him into collision with his imperious suzerain—and a French party, which encouraged the Queen to aim at a share in the government and continually misrepresented Murat's actions to the Emperor,

The reconciliation between the King and Napoleon, indeed, was not of long duration. The Austrian marriage was very far from commending itself to the Bonapartes, who, in default of placing the crown matrimonial on the fourteen-year-old head of Lolotte, would have infinitely preferred to see a Saxon, or even a Russian princess, by the Emperor's side, rather than a

niece of Marie Antoinette, who could not fail to find among the members of the old nobility numbers of partisans and counsellors; who would naturally favour the servants of her ill-fated aunt, and might even establish at the Court a system of etiquette which would abolish the privileges of the Imperial Family.

But to none of them was the match so obnoxious as to Caroline and Murat, who saw in it a formidable, and perhaps an insurmountable, obstacle to their ambition of wresting Sicily from the Bourbons and reuniting it to the Kingdom of Naples. For the Archduchess Marie Louise was a daughter of a princess of the Two Sicilies, and it was her grandmother, Marie Caroline of Austria, whom the Murats aspired to dethrone. If this young girl were to secure, as might very well happen, any appreciable influence over the Emperor's mind, Marie Caroline would find in her a more redoubtable ally than even the British cruisers, and they might bid farewell for ever to their dreams of conquest.

At the council of Grand Dignitaries and Ministers convened, on January 28, 1810, at the Tuileries, to deliberate on the momentous question of the re-marriage of the Emperor, Murat strongly opposed an alliance which would "re-awaken the memories of the Austrian woman [Marie Antoinette] always odious to the nation," and would estrange from his Majesty the partisans of the Revolution, without securing him the

support of the Royalists. From Austria, he maintained, France had nothing to fear. Had they not recently humbled her to the dust? Russia was the only power which could balance the fortune of the Emperor; an alliance with the Czar was in every way to be preferred.

Murat seemed to the council to be voicing the sentiments of the Bonapartes and a considerable part of the nation, but, in point of fact, he was merely his own and his wife's advocate; and this the Emperor perfectly understood. As Napoleon had convened the council merely to prepare opinion for the step upon which he had already decided, he was exceedingly irritated to see his brother-in-law cloaking his own ambitious designs under specious arguments which could not fail to make a strong appeal to many of those present, and advocating his union with a Russian princess, whose hand the Emperor knew it was the intention of Alexander to refuse him. However, he decided to reassure Murat, or rather Caroline, on the subject of Sicily, and it was the latter whom he entrusted with the important mission of receiving the future Empress at Braunau, the frontier town of Austria, and conducting her to Compiègne.

Caroline was highly gratified by so signal a mark of her brother's confidence and esteem, more particularly, since the long journey across Europe *tête-à-tête* with her sister-in-law would enable her to insinuate herself into the girl's

confidence and friendship, and impart to her impressions of the Emperor and the principal personages of the Imperial Court, which, however false they might be, would not be readily effaced. However, the chief and most permanent impression which she succeeded in giving Marie Louise was that the Queen of Naples was a singularly odious young woman, of the correctness of which there can be very little question.

On arriving at Braunau, the young archduchess had sent her Austrian Household back to Vienna, with the single exception of her Grand-Mistress, Madame Lajenska. This lady had superintended her education and had never been separated from her, and it had been expressly stipulated that she was to remain with her former pupil, to whom she was tenderly attached.

Unhappily, a dispute arose between the Grand-Mistress and the newly-appointed French ladies-in-waiting, who had come from Paris to replace the Austrians; and the latter naturally appealed to the Queen of Naples. The dispute seems to have been of a very trivial nature; but Caroline, who feared that she might find in Madame Lajenska an obstacle to the influence which she desired to exercise over the young Empress's mind, immediately sent off a courier to Napoleon, giving him a highly-coloured version of the affair, and formally demanding the dismissal of the Grand-Mistress. The Emperor consented, and, on arriving at Munich, his orders were com-

municated to the tearful Marie Louise, who, of course, had no choice but to intimate to her faithful servant that she must return to Vienna.

"What was the worst feature in the conduct of the Queen of Naples," writes one of Marie Louise's ladies-in-waiting, "is that, after having exacted from the Empress her consent to the departure of Madame Lajenska, she gave instructions to the ladies-in-waiting to prevent this lady from entering the Empress's apartments, if she presented herself to take farewell of her. This order was not executed, for the ladies in question, wounded by such harshness, caused the Grand-Mistress to be admitted by a secret door. She passed two hours with her pupil, and, notwithstanding the reproaches which this action brought upon them, they never repented of it."[1]

Nor was this episode the only cause of complaint which Caroline gave her sister-in-law. She imposed her will upon her in every way: for meals, for retiring to rest, for rising in the morning, for the length of the day's journey, for the fêtes which were given in her honour, without the slightest regard for the fatigue which continuous travelling and public receptions entailed, or for a young girl's natural grief at leaving her home and all who were dear to her for a foreign land. She gave her much unsolicited advice as to her future conduct, both as Empress and wife; she counselled her as to the toilettes she

[1] Madame de Durand, *Mémoires*.

should wear, the *couturières* and jewellers she should patronise or avoid, and, finally, on her arrival at Compiègne, in defiance both of the rules of etiquette and of decorum, tormented her into according the Emperor the privilege which, in like circumstances, Marie de' Medici had accorded Henry IV. In short, Caroline, whose manner, pleasing to the Emperor and to a certain class of men, rendered her odious to the more refined of her own sex, succeeded in offending at once "the modesty of the young girl, the pride of the archduchess, and the dignity of the Empress," and, from that moment, Marie Louise conceived for her youngest sister-in-law a profound aversion, which she was never able to overcome.

It will be remembered that at Napoleon's coronation, in 1804, the Imperial Princesses had protested strenuously against the duty imposed upon them by the Emperor of supporting the train of the Empress's mantle. It might have been supposed that when a like service was required of them, on the occasion of the religious marriage, in the Salon Carré at the Louvre, on April 2, 1810,[1] no objection would have been raised, since the new Empress was a princess of one of the oldest Royal Houses in Europe, and, moreover, they had no personal feeling against her, as they had had against her predecessor. Nevertheless, they

[1] The civil ceremony had taken place the previous day at Saint-Cloud.

were unanimous in indignant protest against the Imperial command, pointing out that the humiliation to which his Majesty proposed to subject them was even greater than in 1804, for whereas, at that time, they were merely princesses by courtesy, they were now queens or *reigning* princesses. And, besides, was not a Bonaparte, or the wife of a Bonaparte, the equal of any Hapsburg?

Caroline, determined that no consideration should induce her to compromise the dignity of her crown by fulfilling a "servile function," represented to the Emperor that, since on the arrival of the Empress at Braunau, she had fulfilled the duties of an ambassadress, and was at present discharging those of Superintendent of her Majesty's Household, she ought to "accompany her" at the marriage-ceremony, and not attend upon her, and cited the case of the Duchesse d'Orléans at the marriage of Marie Leczinska to Louis XV in support of her contention.[1]

The Emperor yielded, but the Queens of Spain and Westphalia, and Élisa and Pauline, were unable to allege any precedent in support of their claim. They, however, held a conference in *Madame Mère's* salon at the Hôtel de Brienne, and appealed to Letizia to uphold them. This the old lady very prudently declined to do, for, though she sympathised with the malcontents, she had learned, by experience, that there was

[1] M. Frédéric Masson, *Napoléon et sa famille.*

nothing to be gained by opposing a will even more stubborn than her own. "My daughters and daughters-in-law," said she, sternly, "bear in mind that the Emperor is accustomed to be obeyed. He is wrong perhaps in this instance; but, if he persists in his demand, you must do as he bids you." Napoleon, happening to enter the room at that moment, heard the concluding words of this sage counsel, and, divining the subject which had called them forth, gave his mother a grateful look, and then, turning on the fair rebels, by a few sharp words, reduced them at once to submission.[1]

During the fêtes which followed the marriage, the Queen of Naples gave a fresh proof of the extent to which she was impregnated with the worst characteristics of her race. Her old admirer Metternich, now Minister for Foreign Affairs at Vienna, had returned to France for the marriage; and Caroline, more from political than sentimental reasons, looked forward to resuming with him her former relations. Great, then, was her anger and mortification on discovering that Metternich had become the lover—or, at least, the very ardent *soupirant*—of "that little plague of a Madame Junot," whose virtue, once impregnable, had begun to falter, owing to the constant infidelities of her husband. Furious that her plans should be thus thwarted, her Majesty resolved to be avenged, and her vengeance took a

[1] Baron Larrey, *Madame Mère.*

KLEMENS LOTHAR WENZEL, PRINCE VON METTERNICH

FROM AN ENGRAVING BY LEWIS, AFTER THE PAINTING BY SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE (BRITISH MUSEUM)

peculiarly odious form. Having bribed her rival's *femme de chambre* to discover where her mistress kept the letters she received from her distinguished admirer, she informed Junot, on the occasion of a masked ball, at which the disguise which she had adopted effectually concealed her identity, that his wife was deceiving him with Metternich, and that he would find abundant proof of her guilt in a packet of letters tied with pink ribbon, in a certain drawer in Madame's escritoire. Junot, who, notwithstanding his own peccadilloes, seems to have expected from his wife the chastity of a Lucretia, immediately quitted the ball-room, returned to his hôtel, broke open the escritoire, and possessed himself of the incriminating letters. And when, some hours later, their rightful owner, all unconscious of the storm that was impending, made her appearance, there was a terrible scene, which ended in the general administering to the wife of his bosom a castigation which compelled her to keep her bed for some days. Not content with this, he desired to challenge Metternich to a duel, and was with difficulty persuaded to renounce his homicidal intentions.[1]

[1] The above is the version of the affair given by Mlle. Avrillon, whose testimony, owing to her hostility to the Bonapartes, ought usually to be received with caution. On this occasion, however, her story is corroborated in substance, if not in detail, by other writers. According to the account which M. Masson seems to consider the most reliable, Caroline bribed Madame Junot's *femme de chambre* to steal the letters, and then sent them to the general. In regard to the castigation which the lady received, there seems to be no question.

While his wife was engaged in disturbing the domestic peace of the Junots, Murat was endeavouring to obtain the Emperor's sanction to his attempting the conquest of Sicily. But Napoleon, who had not forgiven his brother-in-law his opposition to the Austrian marriage, and had, moreover, various grievances against him in regard to his government of Naples, declined to give it. In his mortification, Murat was so indiscreet as to attribute his Majesty's decision to the influence of Marie Louise, whereupon Napoleon flew into a violent passion and overwhelmed him with reproaches; and, though Murat subsequently expressed his regret and besought the Emperor to overlook his offence, he was treated with marked coldness during the remainder of his stay in France.

Towards the end of April, he returned to Naples, leaving Caroline in Paris to plead his cause, for, whatever the differences between the King and Queen on other matters, they were at one in their desire to unite Sicily to their realm. Confident that his wife's persuasive powers would ultimately prevail, Murat began to make extensive preparations for the projected expedition, about the success of which he seems to have entertained no sort of doubt, even after the tragedy which occurred a few days after his return to Naples, when a British frigate of 50 guns sailed into the Bay, sank one of the Neapolitan ships lying there, swept the decks of

another with a terrible broadside, which killed or disabled every officer on board, and drove the whole squadron in ignominious flight under the guns of the fortifications.

At length, Caroline, who remained in France until the beginning of September, succeeded in wresting the authorisation so much desired from the Emperor, and on the night of September 17–18, 1810, the expeditionary force, which consisted partly of Neapolitan and partly of French troops, embarked. A dead calm following a violent storm detained the British cruisers in the harbour of Messina, and the first division, under General Cavaignac, succeeded in effecting a landing, and occupied the village of San Stefano. Owing, however, either to the indecision of Murat or to dissensions among the French generals, Cavaignac was left totally unsupported, and having been attacked in the morning by an Anglo-Sicilian force, while the British squadron threatened to cut off his communications, was compelled to re-embark, leaving more than a thousand men and officers in the hands of the enemy.

Murat attributed this disaster to secret orders which the Emperor had sent to Grenier, who commanded the French troops; the Emperor threw all the blame on Murat; and the ill-feeling between the two brothers-in-law became more pronounced than ever.

CHAPTER XXVIII

The hopes built by *Madame Mère* on the divorce and remarriage of the Emperor disappointed—Her mortification at the strained relations between Napoleon and his family—She assists as godmother at the baptism of the King of Rome—Her departure for Aix-la-Chapelle—Pauline and Casimir de Montrond—Arrest of the latter wrongly attributed to his relations with the princess—The Russian colonel—Canouville again in favour—His indiscretion—He is sent to Danzig by order of the Emperor—Grief of Pauline—Troubles of Élisa in Tuscany—The Emperor forbids the Paris journals to insert eulogistic references to the Grand-Duchess—Élisa's protection of the Arts—Her *protégés*—Her toilette.

MADAME MÈRE, as we have seen, had built great hopes on the overthrow of Joséphine. She had counted that, the Beauharnais influence once removed, all would go well: that Lucien would be pardoned and recalled; that a better understanding would be established between the Emperor and Louis; that Jérôme would get his debts paid, and that she herself would obtain a substantial increase of her pension, and perhaps other advantages. None of these expectations were fulfilled. To her unspeakable mortification, she found that all that the divorce had accomplished was to remove one obstacle to the gratification of her desires to replace it by another far more formidable.

The malign influence over the Emperor's mind which the Bonapartes had been wont to attribute to Joséphine was to a great extent illusory——a mere figment of their heated imaginations; indeed, it has since been shown that, in more than one instance, such as the second disgrace of Lucien, where they had believed her to have been working against them, she had endeavoured, if unsuccessfully, to further their wishes. But, in point of fact, the influence exercised by the ex-Empress over her husband had, since the rude shocks which her reputation had sustained in the early years of their married life, been very slight, and, at the last, had been almost a negligible quantity.

On the other hand, Marie Louise, with the prestige of her illustrious birth, her youth, and her approaching maternity, constituted a serious menace to the ascendency of the family. And, unhappily, Marie Louise had arrived in France already strongly prejudiced against her new relatives by the manner in which Caroline had treated her during the journey from Braunau. Nor had a closer acquaintance tended to remove this unfortunate impression, for the Empress's *Dame d'honneur*, the Duchesse de Montebello, who had speedily acquired great influence over her mistress, disliked the Bonapartes, and *Madame* in particular, and took care to prevent any *rapprochement*.

Madame was a sad and disillusioned woman

in those days; wherever she looked, she encountered nothing but mortifications and disappointments. Lucien was in England, nominally in a sort of semi-captivity, but really under the protection of the Emperor's redoubtable foe, and Napoleon was so infuriated against him that no one dared to mention his name. Louis, after a violent quarrel with his imperious brother, had abdicated and retired to Grätz. Joseph was also on very bad terms with the Emperor, and was continually threatening to follow his younger brother's example. Jérôme was living a life of folly and extravagance in Westphalia, and every day giving fresh proof of his utter unfitness for a crown. Caroline was on bad terms with her husband. Pauline was rapidly establishing her claim to be considered the most celebrated *amoureuse* of her time, though that was probably the least of *Madame's* chagrins. Élisa was threatened with the dismemberment of her principality, if the arrears owing to the Imperial Treasury were not paid. Even Fesch — that most complaisant of prelates—had fallen into disgrace with the Emperor, and had been deprived of the coadjutorship of Ratisbon, and the reversion of the exalted office of Prince-Primate, guaranteed to him by a Papal Bull in October 1806. If the fortunes of Napoleon himself seemed unassailable, the affairs of the family, as a whole, were certainly not going well.

A letter which *Madame* wrote to Baciocchi, at

the beginning of May, in reference to the death of the little Jérôme Charles, betrays the grief and mortification which the poor lady was experiencing at the discovery that, in place of the confidently-anticipated *rapprochement*, the Emperor's divorce and remarriage had only served to widen the gulf between him and his family :

"In the position in which I am placed, I am unable to offer you the least consolation. I have need of it myself, and nothing offers it to us in this world. It is only in Heaven that one can expect it."

However, she assisted at the baptism of the King of Rome, as godmother, and received, as a souvenir of the occasion, a present of some beautiful Sèvres vases and a magnificent piece of Gobelins tapestry from the Emperor, though she would have infinitely preferred an increase of her pension, and the fact that his Majesty did not think fit to commemorate the event in that fashion was a fresh disappointment. At the end of June, she set out for Aix-la-Chapelle, whither she was soon followed by Pauline, for Borghese was once more in Paris, and, having had the good fortune to find favour with Marie Louise, had been granted a prolonged *congé*.

Pauline did not occupy the same house as her mother at Aix ; she was far too extravagant for *Madame* to have any wish to share expenses with her. For a single month, the expenses of herself and her entourage amounted to over 100,000

francs, exclusive of the presents she made to the doctors who attended her, the Prefect of the Roër,[1] and other persons, and the alms she distributed among the poor.

When, at the end of July, *Madame* set out for Cassel to pay a long-promised visit to the King and Queen of Westphalia, Pauline removed to Spa to complete her cure. Here she found Talleyrand's friend, Casimir de Montrond, who, exiled forty leagues from Paris two years before, had taken up his residence in Antwerp. M. de Montrond had long passed his fortieth year, but his devotion to the fair had survived his youth, and, as he bore a great, and not undeserved, reputation both as a dandy and a wit, he was still a force to be reckoned with in the lists of gallantry.

Pauline, who thought it a thousand pities that so charming and accomplished a man should remain in exile for his opinions,[2] determined to undertake his political conversion, which, of course, necessitated frequent private interviews between them. If we are to believe the Comte de Mérode Westerloo, in order to facilitate her

[1] She presented the Prefect, M. Ladoucette, with a bust of herself, and that worthy official, transported with admiration, acknowledged the precious gift in the following verses:

"Dieux! Que son front est noble et que son œil est doux!
L'Égypte ne peut plus admirer Cléopâtre,
La Grèce de Vénus cesse d'être idolâtre,
Et la Gaule ravie embrasse vos genoux."

[2] According to some writers, the exile of M. de Montrond had not been wholly unconnected with a too openly-expressed admiration for her Imperial Highness.

task, she established herself with her intended convert, "in a beautiful house at the entrance of the town."[1] But, as the count adds that, "faithful to his practice of avoiding the Emperor and every one connected with the Imperial Family" he fled from Spa immediately the princess arrived, he does not appear to us to be an altogether trustworthy witness, notwithstanding the confidence which MM. Turquan and d'Almeras repose in him.

On September 28, Pauline set out for Antwerp, where their Majesties were shortly expected. Montrond followed her, but scarcely had he arrived, when he was arrested and conveyed to the Château of Ham—where, thirty years later, Louis Napoleon was imprisoned—and subsequently to Châtillon-sur-Seine, from which, however, he succeeded in making his escape, and took refuge in England.

Certain chroniclers pretend that the discovery of the prominent part which interviews with Montrond had played in Pauline's cure at Spa greatly exasperated the Emperor, and that this was the true motive of that gentleman's arrest—an assertion to which the careless way in which he appears to have been guarded at Châtillon would seem to lend colour. On the other hand, Madame de Saluces, Pauline's *lectrice* and confidante, who was shortly afterwards dismissed by her mistress "for having misapplied funds en-

[1] *Souvenirs.*

trusted to her," asserted, on her return to Turin, where her husband was one of Borghese's chamberlains, that the causes of her disgrace and of Montrond's arrest were identical, namely, that the latter had transferred his affections from her Imperial Highness to herself, and that, "in her jealous fury, the princess had not been able to support the humiliation of occupying the second place in the heart of a perfidious libertine."

As a matter of fact, the reasons for Montrond's arrest were purely political. He was suspected of being mixed up in the intrigues and speculations of Talleyrand, of being in treasonable communication with the British Government, and of making use of his friendship with Voyer d'Argenson, Prefect of the Département des Deux-Nèthes, to worm out of that too-confiding nobleman a number of official secrets, which surely sufficiently explain the steps taken against him without seeking for any romantic motive!

Pauline was not long in finding consolation for the enforced departure of her mediæval admirer, as, soon after she had left Antwerp, Bellemare, the Commissioner of Police in that city, sent a report to Savary, the Minister of Police, in which he informed him that during the princess's stay in Antwerp "a Russian colonel, named Kouloukoff, who had been received by her at Aix-la-Chapelle, established himself at Malines, from which place he paid daily visits to Antwerp, arriving at nightfall and departing in the morning. . . . I am

able to say that he did not sleep at an inn. I believe his visits ceased before the departure of Madame de Saluces."

Now, the commissioner at Antwerp and his chief in Paris were both well aware that Madame de Saluces had lodged in the same house as the princess; but respect for her Imperial Highness prevented the prudent M. Bellemare from mentioning her name, and accordingly he substituted that of her confidante, and left Savary to draw his own conclusions. As for the Russian colonel, M. Masson is of opinion that he was not a Russian at all, but the enterprising Canouville—who about this time returned to France—masquerading in a Muscovite uniform;[1] and certainly such an adventure would have been a mere trifle to a gentleman who for love's sweet sake had twice made the long and perilous journey across Spain without an escort and without drawing rein save to change horses.

However that may be, when Pauline returned to Paris, Canouville was again in high favour. One might have supposed that his recent experiences would have taught him the value of discretion, and that he would have refrained from advertising his *bonne fortune* quite so industriously. But alas! he was, if it were possible, more imprudent than ever, and at a ball which Pauline gave, towards the end of November, at Neuilly, he was continually by her side.

[1] *Napoléon et sa famille.*

Dearly did he pay for his temerity! For, three days later, as Berthier was sipping his morning coffee, he received a letter from the Emperor, bidding him inform the unfortunate Canouville that, before the clocks struck nine, he was to leave Paris and betake himself to Danzig, where he would be employed as *chef d'escadron* in the 2nd Chasseurs; and his Majesty further desired him to notify to the officer in question that on no account was he to return to Paris, even with an order from the Minister of War, unless it had been countersigned by Berthier.

Pauline was prostrated with grief when the news was communicated to her. To recover her lover, only to lose him again almost immediately, was indeed a crushing blow! And how cruel not even to allow him a few hours' grace in which to ride to Neuilly and bid her farewell! Ah! how she anathematised that miserable ball—the first of a series she intended to give that winter—which had been the immediate cause of the calamity! She sent a courier galloping after him, with a letter filled, we may presume, with expressions of undying affection, and bearing, also, perhaps that portrait of herself which Canouville took with him into his last battle.[1] But all the tender messages in the world could not bring him back; he was gone, and she was never to see him again.[2]

[1] See page 262 *infra*.

[2] Poor Canouville seems to have had a very bad time at Danzig.

Refused permission by the Emperor to assist at the baptism of the King of Rome, Élisa repaired to Leghorn for a course of sea-bathing, which, it will be remembered, his Majesty had recommended her. It was perhaps a pity that Napoleon could not accompany his sister, since that once prosperous port would have presented him with a striking object-lesson. The Continental Blockade—that fatal policy into which his blind hatred for the one nation which refused to bend to his will had led him—which, on the coasts of Tuscany, the French *douaniers* enforced with inflexible severity, had ruined Leghorn; commerce was almost entirely suspended; many merchants had been reduced to poverty; the poorer classes were in the direst necessity, and every day the hostility to French rule, which had brought such calamities on the city, was increasing.

However, the Grand-Duchess's salt-water cure seems to have proved a success, which was fortunate, as she had certainly a good deal on her

The colonel of the 2nd Chasseurs was a terrible martinet, who kept him so assiduously to his professional duties that he had scarcely time to pen a love-letter, and generally made his life a burden to him. Pauline was deeply distressed on learning of the sad lot of her lover, and when, in the following May, Murat, on his way to join the Grand Army in Poland, arrived in Paris, she begged him to alleviate it, by asking for Canouville to be appointed one of his aides-de-camp. Murat, who was fond of Pauline, good-naturedly consented, and wrote to the Minister of War; but that personage, aware that he was treading on dangerous ground, regretted that he was unable to accede to his Majesty's request without referring the matter to the Emperor, who curtly replied that he "did not think it advisable to appoint M. *le chef d'escadron* de Canouville to be one of the aides-de-camp of the King of Naples."

hands just then. Not only was the Continental System arousing universal discontent,[1] but great difficulty was being experienced in enforcing the conscription, and the gendarmerie were constantly occupied in hunting down refractory conscripts; the Chapter of Florence had refused to recognise as archbishop the French prelate whom the Emperor had thrust upon it, in defiance of the Pope, who had refused to ratify the appointment;[2] the Luccans were grumbling at the laws with which she continued to overwhelm them, and she was also beginning to find that her Civil List was altogether inadequate for the magnificence which she desired to maintain.[3]

[1] To Élisa's credit, it should be recorded that she did not hesitate to point out to the Emperor the disastrous effects of the Continental System in Tuscany.

[2] Osmont, formerly vicar-general of the Cardinal de Brienne, Bishop of Nancy. The more superstitious Florentines avoided him as though he had the Evil Eye, in the belief that his benediction carried excommunication with it. One day, Principessa Teano, a very devout daughter of the Church, while driving in her carriage, perceived his Grace approaching, whereupon she lowered the window-blinds in all haste. A few days later, the Archbishop was walking on the terrace of Baciocchi's palace, which faced the Palazzo Teano, when he caught sight of the princess peeping at him through the half-closed shutters of her salon. He immediately raised his voice—it was an exceptionally powerful one—and bawled the dreaded benediction across the street, after which he retired chuckling, leaving the unfortunate lady nearly dead with fright.

[3] Her Civil List, by a decree of January 10, 1810, had been fixed at 1,500,000 francs, but, of this sum, one-third was to be devoted to the maintenance of museums, scientific establishments, and libraries. Moreover, the Civil List was, in great part, composed of the revenues of Crown estates, which varied considerably. Thus, for the year 1810, there was a deficit of 300,000 francs.—M. Rodocanachi, *Élisa Napoléon en Italie.*

She had other vexations.

The Emperor showed himself so tenacious of his authority in Tuscany, that even the suspicion of an attempt on his sister's part to assert her independence was sure to bring upon her a sharp reminder that, notwithstanding her sonorous title, she was, as a matter of fact, nothing but an *employée* of the Government, and must conduct herself as such. Once, when she had instructed her secretary to write, in her name, to the Minister for War in Paris, he caused her to be informed, that this manner of conducting her correspondence was "ridiculous, and contrary to the dignity of his Ministers and to the welfare of the public service." He strongly objected to the flattering allusions to the Grand-Duchess which, thanks to her complaisant journalistic friends, were constantly appearing in the Paris Press, and was particularly irritated when, in December 1811, the *Journal de Paris* published an account of the enthusiasm with which Élisa had been received at Leghorn, on the occasion of her assisting at the launching of a new man-of-war: "Her Imperial Highness embarked upon a superb sloop, and went to visit the flotilla which lay at anchor in the harbour. Everywhere she was welcomed by cries of '*Vive Élisa! Vive l'Empereur!*'" He was, indeed, so angry that he wrote to the Minister of Police, bidding him take immediate steps to put a stop to the publication of "these absurdities," adding: "Europe troubles

little about what the Grand-Duchess does. The less one speaks of her, the better it will be." After this, journalistic flattery of Élisa seems to have been confined to the Italian gazettes, to the editors of which the handwriting of her Imperial Highness's secretary was perhaps not altogether unfamiliar.

However, Élisa derived some small consolation from the fact that, if the Emperor constantly refused her all initiative in political matters in Tuscany, he left her a perfectly free hand in everything relating to the arts, which permitted her to pose to her heart's content as the successor of the Medici; while he generally acted upon her recommendations. M. Masson would have us believe that she used her influence to push the fortunes of "batches of mediocre artists, parodists of the French school"; but a perusal of M. Paul Marmottan's admirable work, *les Arts en Toscane sous Napoléon : la Princesse Élisa*, proves that such strictures are quite unwarranted, and that the painter Benvenuti, the sculptor Bartolini, the architect Sterne, the engraver Morghen,[1] and other *protégés* of the Grand-

[1] M. Masson speaks of Morghen's abilities with the most withering contempt; but M. Marmottan describes him as "*ce célèbre graveur, un des premiers de l'epoque pour la pureté et l'harmonie*," and, in art matters, he is certainly the safer guide. Élisa obtained for Morghen a commission to engrave David's famous painting, *Bonaparte franchissant les Alpes*, for which he was to be paid 110,000 francs. The work, however, had not been completed when the *débâcle* arrived, and the Bourbons sacrificed the 40,000 francs which had already been paid to the engraver, and caused the unfinished plate to be destroyed.

Duchess were far from undeserving of the patronage bestowed upon them.

Élisa had always been plain, and, with increasing years, she seems to have become positively ugly. The olive complexion which Rœderer had praised turned to a "jaundiced yellow," her thin figure became even more attenuated, and she lost nearly all her hair, and was forced to supply its place with the luxuriant tresses of Tuscan peasant-girls. Under these circumstances, it is somewhat surprising to learn that, in singular contrast to her sisters, she should have devoted but little attention to her toilette, and should have been content to leave the selection of her wardrobe to her modistes and milliners in Paris, who supplied her with two gowns and a certain number of hats every month, for an annual sum which did not amount to as much as Pauline often spent on a single confection. It would appear, however, that Élisa, like certain "advanced" women of our own day, regarded attention to such trifles as the mark of an inferior intellect.

CHAPTER XXIX

Mortifications to which Murat is subjected by the Emperor—He believes his throne in danger—And lends a favourable ear to the suggestions of Maghella, who dreams of a united and independent Italy—Caroline, resenting the isolation to which her husband's jealousy has relegated her, intrigues against him—The Emperor seriously contemplates dethroning Murat—Murat goes to Paris to make his peace—Apprehensions of Caroline—Murat returns to Naples, and is informed by Maghella of the intrigues of the Queen against him—The Decree of June 14, 1812—The Emperor quashes the Decree and assumes a menacing attitude—Caroline's infidelity revealed to her husband—Fury of the King—Humiliating position of the Queen—Murat's intrigues denounced to the Emperor—The stolen Crown jewels of Spain traced to Naples—Caroline is sent to Paris to appease her brother—Murat is summoned to join the Grand Army.

AFTER the failure of the expedition against Sicily, Murat returned to Naples where he found Caroline very ill, the result of a miscarriage, which had nearly cost her her life. However, his consort's condition seems to have troubled his Majesty very little, in comparison with the mortifications to which he was now constantly subjected at the hands of the Emperor. Not a despatch arrived from Napoleon which did not inflict some fresh wound on his brother-in-law's vanity. Now, it was an order to the French generals to confiscate every ship in the ports of Naples which carried or was suspected of carrying

English goods; now, a demand that the duty on French cloth and silk should be removed; anon, a refusal to allow Murat to accredit Ministers to Vienna and St. Petersburg, or a complaint that the Neapolitan contingent in Spain was nothing but "a horde of brigands, who polluted every district through which they passed," or an order to change the titles of the officers of his Guard, because they resembled those used in France, or a sneer at the King's project of reconstituting the Neapolitan nobility. Moreover, he exercised, through his agents at Naples and Rome, the most rigorous surveillance over the King's actions, and Murat was unable to take any step of the slightest importance without its being speedily known in Paris.

Although the attitude assumed by Napoleon towards the King of Naples was very similar to that which he adopted towards the other puppet sovereigns whom he had set up, and it is improbable that he had any other intention than to show his brother-in-law that he was determined to repress with a firm hand any attempt on his part to assert his independence, Murat began to fear that the Emperor was really seeking sufficient pretext for dethroning him, or, in default of that, that he was resolved to render his position so intolerable that he would have no alternative but to abdicate, as Louis had already done. His resentment against his suzerain increased every day, and, unfortunately, there were those at his

side who were only too ready to envenom the wounds under which he was smarting.

The chief of these was Maghella, the cunning Genoese of whom we have already spoken. Salicetti, the Minister of Police, had died towards the end of 1809, and his subordinate, who, it was whispered, had taken measures to precipitate his demise, had stepped into his shoes, and was rapidly acquiring a great influence over the King. Maghella's head was filled with grandiose schemes. He detested the Napoleonic domination and dreamed of becoming the founder of an independent and united Italy, with its King, its flag, and its free institutions. He believed that ere long an opportunity of shaking off the Imperial yoke would present itself, when Murat, with himself at his side, and the Neapolitan army, and perhaps an English contingent, at his back, might raise the standard of revolt, and become the head of a great national movement, which would not be stayed until every Frenchman who did not embrace their cause had been driven over the Alps and the independence of Italy assured.

His ideas appealed too strongly to his ambitious and uneasy master for them to fail to meet with a favourable reception, though Murat's immediate object seems to have been rather to protect the throne which he believed to be menaced than to attempt the rôle which Victor Emmanuel was to play half a century later.

Any way, he authorised Maghella to open negotiations with the patriots in several of the chief cities of Italy, with a view to ascertaining what amount of support he might expect to receive from them should the necessity of defending his crown arise. It was the first step down that dangerous slope which was to lead him to the betrayal of 1814!

At the same time, Murat endeavoured to prevail upon the Emperor to send back the "horde of brigands" he was employing in Catalonia, and to reduce the French Army of Naples from 10,000 to 5,000 men, on the ground that the country was unable to support the expense of so large a corps, and that the 40,000 Italian troops which he had raised were quite capable of repelling any invasion which the English in Sicily might attempt. His Majesty very sensibly expressed the opinion that 12,000 English soldiers would make very short work of the Neapolitan army, at which Murat pretended to be deeply offended, and assured the Emperor that he had "no fear whatever of the English, and that the Neapolitans despised them." However, Napoleon refused either to dispense with the services of the Neapolitan contingent in Spain or to reduce the French Army of Naples.

While Murat was intriguing against the Emperor, Caroline was intriguing against him. Since the Queen's return to Naples in September, 1810, her husband's jealous fears of some fresh

attempt on her part to influence the Ministers had again reduced her to a very humiliating position. Many of her French attendants, particularly those ladies whose husbands occupied official positions in the State, were taken away from her; she was condemned to spend the greater part of her time in the country-residences of the Crown, and his Majesty allowed it to be seen that he regarded with a jaundiced eye those who were at all assiduous in paying court to his consort. Caroline's haughty spirit naturally revolted against such treatment, and she and her friends retaliated by representing the King's actions to the Emperor in a very unfavourable light.

These representations were not without effect, and, at the beginning of March 1811, the Emperor, who was further incensed against his brother-in-law, owing to the latter having imposed a duty on French cloth, and the lax manner in which the Continental Blockade was being enforced on the coasts of Naples, seems to have seriously contemplated dethroning him, and even went so far as to intimate to the Neapolitan Ambassador in Paris that, if he did not speedily see an alteration in his master's conduct, "he would deprive him of his kingdom and appoint a viceroy to govern it."

When his Majesty's words were reported to Murat, he became seriously alarmed, and, on the pretext of felicitating the Emperor in person on

the birth of his heir, hurried off to Paris,[1] and endeavoured to clear himself from the "atrocious calumnies" by which his suzerain's mind was being prejudiced against him. Napoleon appeared to be satisfied with his assurances of devotion, but, on the King proposing to return to Naples, he desired him to prolong his visit, and when the beginning of May found Murat still at the French Court, it seems to have been the general opinion, both in Paris and Naples, that the Emperor intended to keep him there altogether.

Caroline now began to regret the part she had played in inflaming the Emperor's mind against her husband, for, if she aspired to a share of power, she desired above all things to preserve her crown. When she received an invitation from Napoleon to assist at the baptism of the King of Rome, as one of the godmothers, she appears to have seen in this high honour nothing but a lure to induce her to join her husband in Paris, in order that the Emperor might be able to depose them and annex their kingdom without trouble or scandal. Accordingly, with an infinitude of regrets "on the cruel and irreparable privation that her health imposed upon her," she excused herself from undertaking the journey to France to fulfil this duty in person, delegated it to the ex-Queen of Holland, and remained at Naples to await events.

[1] MM. Chavanon and Saint-Yves state that Caroline accompanied her husband to Paris, but this is incorrect.

The Emperor, however, had, for the moment, abandoned his hostile intentions, for he had now practically decided on war with Russia, when he would have need of Murat's services, and also of the Neapolitan contingent which the King was under obligation to furnish. He therefore changed his tone, treated his brother-in-law with cordiality, and, on May 19, authorised his return to Naples. Three days later, Murat left Paris, having assured his Majesty that his desire was to conform in all things to his wishes.

Scarcely had he reached his capital, when Maghella presented himself and informed him that he had discovered that, for some time past, the Queen, with the complicity of Daure and other Frenchmen in the Neapolitan service, had been addressing false reports concerning the King to the Emperor, with the object of bringing about his deposition and the transfer of the crown to her own head.[1] He also seems to have insinuated that the relations between her Majesty and more than one of the persons whose names he mentioned were not entirely of a political nature, and to have succeeded in arousing in his master's mind suspicions that the confidence which, notwithstanding all that had happened, he still reposed in the virtue of his wife was far from justified. Finally, he urged him to end an intolerable situation by ridding himself without

[1] It is extremely improbable that such was the object of Caroline's intrigues. She would no doubt have been content with a share of power.

delay of the dangerous persons who surrounded the Queen and of all who preferred the interests of France to his own.

Murat, greatly incensed, acted upon the Minister's advice, and, on June 14, issued two decrees. By the first, which was to come into operation on July 1, all foreigners employed in the Excise were to be discharged and replaced by Neapolitans. By the second, all Frenchmen holding any office, whether civil or military, under the Crown were required to become naturalised Neapolitans before August 1.

The result was exceedingly disconcerting for Murat, as not only the Queen's friends, but nearly the whole of the French in the Neapolitan service, immediately tendered their resignations, and he found himself threatened with the complete disorganisation of his Court, his administration, and his army. Moreover, the Emperor was furious at what he deemed the audacity of his brother-in-law, and disdaining to take any notice of his explanation that the second decree was merely directed against certain individuals in the Civil Service whom he had cause to distrust, proceeded to pulverise it by an Imperial decree (July 6), the terms of which were as follows:

"In reference to our Decree of 13 March 1806, in virtue of which the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies becomes part of our Empire; considering that the Prince who governs this State is a Frenchman and a Grand Dignitary, and that

he has only been placed and maintained on his throne by the efforts of our peoples, we have decreed and decree: Art. 1. All French citizens are citizens of the Two Sicilies. Art. 2. The Decree of 14 June of the King of this country is not applicable to them."

He also sent orders to General Grenier, who commanded the Corps of Observation of Southern Italy,[1] to concentrate the Imperial troops between Naples, Capua, and Gaeta, and instructed Durand, his Ambassador at the Neapolitan Court, to inform Murat that he had orders to leave Naples the moment he learned that a single person had been deprived of his employment merely because he was a Frenchman.

Murat, in great trepidation, hastened to annul the unfortunate decree, and to address to the Emperor letters filled with his usual extravagant expressions of devotion; but his Majesty declined to be mollified, and things began to assume a most threatening aspect.

Conjugal troubles came to add to the King's embarrassments. The Minister of Police, in the course of his professional investigations, happened to discover some exceedingly compromising epistles of Caroline, which placed the question of her infidelity to her husband beyond all doubt, and laid them before the King. Murat, who was

[1] Towards the end of June, the Emperor had disbanded the French Army of Naples, of which Murat held the command, and replaced it by a Corps of Observation, under the command of Grenier.

already ill, "had a violent attack of fever, and it was feared that he would become mad," declared that he would exile the Queen and never set eyes on her again, and so forth. Caroline defended herself desperately, shed torrents of tears, explained what was capable of any explanation, and attributed what was not to the machinations of her enemies; but she does not appear to have made much impression upon her husband. Finally, however, thanks to the intervention of Baudus, the tutor of the young princes, who implored the King, in the interests of his children, not to carry his resentment to extremities, Murat was persuaded to overlook his consort's delinquencies, so far as to promise to take no measures against her.

Nevertheless, Caroline's position was a sufficiently humiliating one. The King, who had hitherto never permitted his political differences with the Queen to interrupt their conjugal relations, now practically separated from her, and relegated her to his country-residence at Capodimonte, where she was kept in a state of semi-captivity, visits from all her French intimates being strictly interdicted, while even Durand was not permitted to have free access to her.

However, this state of affairs only lasted a few weeks, for the tempest which had overturned the throne of Louis and shaken those of Joseph and Jerôme was threatening to burst upon Naples, and Caroline's intervention was required to avert

it. From all sides, the Emperor was receiving accusations against Murat's fidelity. Norvins, the Prefect of Police at Rome, wrote that he was convinced that the King had formed "the criminal project of becoming the master and liberator of Italy," that he was in communication with the English and with the agents of the Pope, and was only waiting until France was engaged in a new war to throw aside the mask. Daure, who had been disgraced by Murat after the affair of the letters, revenged himself by furnishing his Majesty with some very damaging evidence in regard to the anti-French tendencies of those who surrounded the King. Grenier complained that his troops had been refused admission to Gaeta. Finally, the Minister of Police ascertained that Murat kept secret agents in Paris, who received their instructions from Aymé, First Chamberlain to the King.

Nor was this all.

About the middle of August, the Emperor was informed that certain of the Crown jewels of Spain, which had mysteriously disappeared during Murat's occupation of Madrid in the summer of 1808, had been traced to jewellers patronised by the Court of Naples. Aymé was forthwith ordered to resign the post he held at Naples and return to Paris, where, a few days after his arrival, he was arrested, carried off to Vincennes, and strictly interrogated in regard to the missing jewels. He confessed to having seen several of

them in Naples, including the celebrated Peregrine Pearl, which had been presented in 1579 to Philip II.,[1] while the discovery among his papers of certain letters of Murat, written in 1809 and containing frequent references to his relations with Fouché, still further exasperated the Emperor against his brother-in-law.

In the first days of September, Murat received a severe letter from the Emperor. "You are surrounded," wrote Napoleon, "by men who are filled with hatred of France, and who wish to ruin you. All that you write me contrasts too strongly with what you do.[2] I shall see, by your actions, if your heart is still French." About the same time, Murat learned of the arrest of Aymé, and that the French Ambassador was causing inquiries to be made in Naples concerning the missing jewels.

Convinced that not a moment was to be lost, the King hastened to effect a reconciliation with the Queen, and besought her to set out for Paris to see the Emperor and endeavour to pacify him. Caroline, who, notwithstanding her resentment against her husband, had no desire to see him lose his crown, consented, and, on September 17,

[1] Letter of Napoleon to Maret, August 24, 1811, published by M. Masson, *Napoléon et sa famille.*

[2] On August 24, on learning of the discovery of his secret agents in Paris, Murat had written to the Emperor a letter protesting the most extravagant devotion and imploring him to employ him in war, "because he saw no other means to confound his vile accusers, save in seeking to shed his blood again for his Majesty's service."

she started for Paris, accompanied only by her *Dame d'honneur*, a lady-in-waiting, her *Chevalier d'honneur*, and an equerry.

It is probable that she did not go with empty hands, and that the restoration of the Crown jewels of Spain contributed not a little to the success of her mission. Any way, Murat received assurances that the Emperor had no intention of annexing Naples to France, though it is evident, from the tone of the despatches of the French Ministers and from the instructions sent to Grenier, that his Majesty's suspicions concerning his brother-in-law's fidelity were far from allayed. Moreover, in the following March, he recalled Maghella to France and insisted on the dismissal of the Minister of the Interior, Zurlo—a step to which Caroline would appear to have been no stranger[1]—and Murat seems to have seen in this a preliminary to annexation.[2]

However, it was merely a sharp reminder that the Emperor was no longer disposed to tolerate the presence at the Court of Naples of intriguers of this stamp, for, whatever may have been his ultimate intentions with regard to his brother-in-

[1] "These two men," wrote the Austrian Ambassador, the Graf von Mier, to Metternich, "possessed all the confidence of the King, and were, in consequence, regarded with disfavour by the Queen." Despatch of March 27, 1810, published by MM. Chavanon and Saint-Yves.

[2] This was also the opinion of Mier, for, in the despatch of March 27, he adds: "The French Government does everything possible to disgust the King with the position which he occupies *momentarily*, and it appears that the presence of the Queen in Paris merely defers the moment of his recall."

law's kingdom, he had no wish to compromise the success of the Russian campaign by losing the services of perhaps the greatest cavalry leader whom modern battlefields have ever seen.[1]

Towards the middle of April, Murat received permission to leave Naples and to take part in the Russian campaign, and on May 4 he arrived in Paris and rejoined Caroline at the Pavillon d'Italie, in the park of Saint-Cloud, where the Queen had been residing for the past month. A week later, he set out to join Napoleon at Danzig, "happy at the prospect of finding an early opportunity of giving the Emperor proof of his inviolable attachment."

[1] We use the word *battlefield* advisedly. Magnificent when actually in the presence of the enemy, Murat's leadership of the cavalry in other respects left a great deal to be desired, and was sometimes deplorably deficient in prudence and foresight. It would seem, however, unjust to attribute to him, as so many writers do, the full responsibility for those incessant and generally futile reconnaissances which, during the advance on Moscow, wore out the strength of horses and men to such an extent, that, before Smolensk was reached, the strength of the heavy cavalry had been reduced by a third, and that of the light cavalry by more than one half.

CHAPTER XXX

Madame Mère visits the King and Queen of Westphalia at Napoleonshöhe—Honours paid to her—She secretly finances Lucien in England—She goes to Aix-les-Bains—Supervision which she exercises over the affairs of Corsica—The beginning of the *débâcle: Madame's* great qualities reveal themselves once more on the approach of adversity—She seeks to reconcile her sons to the Emperor—Her letter to Louis—The Queen of Westphalia at Pont—*Madame* and Marie Louise—A characteristic story—Departure of Pauline for Aix-les-Bains—Commandant Auguste Duchand of the Artillery—Pauline learns of the death of Canouville, killed at Borodino—Her anguish—She is ordered to winter in the South—Duchand recalled to the Army—Pauline's sojourn at Hyères, Nice, and Gréoulx—She sells a diamond necklace and offers the money to the Emperor.

AT the end of August 1811, *Madame Mère*, it will be remembered, had left Aix-la-Chapelle to visit Jérôme and his wife at Cassel. It is a singular proof of the servility which the Emperor expected from his relatives, even after he had elevated them to thrones, that, before offering his mother hospitality, the King of Westphalia should have deemed it necessary to write to his Imperial Majesty to request his permission to receive her, and that Napoleon should have formally authorised the visit. But no kings of modern times held their thrones on so precarious a tenure as these crowned puppets, whom a single word from their suzerain would have

sufficed to strip, not only of their kingdoms, but of everything they possessed, and to close to them the entire Continent.

In Westphalia, *Madame* was received with the sovereign honours which the Emperor had persistently refused to accord her in France. On the frontier, she was met by the Minister of the Interior, who conducted her to Marburg, where Jérôme's Master of the Ceremonies awaited them. The King himself, with an imposing suite, met her at Wabern, and when the Château of Napoleonshöhe was reached, she found the Queen and all the Court in full gala costume waiting to receive their illustrious guest. This flattering reception so gratified Letizia that she was seized with a sudden access of generosity, and bestowed upon her daughter-in-law—who, from that moment, appears to have quite ousted the worthy Julie from her affections—a portrait of herself set in pearls, and a parasol with a gold and enamelled handle encrusted with pearls, which, however, cost her nothing, since it was a present from Joseph; and to these gifts she subsequently added a string of fine pearls.

Madame's visit, which lasted some six weeks, was one continual round of festivities: balls, fêtes, hunting-parties, picnics, and concerts; but what probably pleased her most, was her pompous entry into Cassel, where all the troops of the garrison were drawn up to receive her, and the municipal authorities in their robes of office

presented her with an address of welcome. Early in October, she returned to France, not, we may presume, without some secret regrets that she could not make her home in a land where she would always be treated *en souveraine;* and for the next few months we hear little of interest concerning her, save that she displayed considerable ingenuity in smuggling money to Lucien in England without the knowledge of the Emperor. Finally, her little plot was discovered by the police, who, of course, reported the matter to his Majesty. But Napoleon, perhaps touched by his mother's devotion to the exile, seems to have decided to ignore her disregard of his orders, for it is certain that Lucien, who was in financial straits, having lost some £8,000 through the failure of his London banker, received large sums from *Madame* during his stay in England.

In the first days of July 1812, *Madame Mère* went to Aix-les-Bains, which was decidedly the watering-place *à la mode* that summer, as Pauline, the Queen of Spain, and Fesch all selected it for their annual cure, as did the ex-Empress, though she did not arrive until the end of September, when most of the fashionable world had taken wing. In Savoy, she remained until late in August, when she returned to Paris, and, after the exchange of more or less ceremonious visits with the Empress, who was then at Saint-Cloud, retired to the Château of Pont, where she

passed the next two months. Her life, separated as she was from all her children, seems to have been exceedingly dull and monotonous, though the immense correspondence she carried on with the scattered members of her family, with the officials of the charitable societies of which she was the patroness, and with the authorities in Corsica, must have given her plenty of occupation.

We may here observe that, although Napoleon denied his mother the smallest political influence in France, he allowed her and Fesch to exercise a kind of supervision over the affairs of Corsica; and Arrighi, the Prefect of the island, appears to have received orders from him that he was never to make any appointment without consulting *Madame* or the cardinal. It is to be feared that this system can scarcely have conduced to efficiency, since the prejudice which Letizia and, in a less degree, her brother always cherished against those who had taken part against the Bonapartes in 1793 must have excluded from the administration many persons whose character and abilities would have ordinarily ensured their promotion; while, at the same time, others with nothing to recommend them save some distant relationship to the Imperial Family found themselves selected for lucrative and important posts.

Madame returned to Paris at the end of October, a few days after the Malet affair, which does not appear, from her letters, to have ruffled

her composure, and spent the remainder of the autumn partly in the capital, and partly with her daughter-in-law, the Queen of Spain, at Mortefontaine, with an occasional visit to Saint-Cloud, to see the Empress—or rather the King of Rome.

Meanwhile, amid ever-deepening misery, the wreck of the Grand Army was struggling back to the Niemen ; and on the evening of December 18, the Emperor, who had quitted his sore-stricken troops, at Smorgoni, on the 5th, arrived in Paris, and presently the full extent of the most appalling disaster in all the annals of modern warfare was revealed to a horrified country. The first act of the tragedy which *Madame* had foreseen, even when cannon was thundering and bells pealing in honour of Napoleon's victories in Austria, Prussia, and Poland, had been played ; the second and third were to have for their theatre the Saxon plains ; the last, France itself.

It was now that the great qualities of the woman began to reveal themselves once more—that indomitable spirit, that indefatigable energy, that clearness of judgment, which had carried her and her children through the trials of her married life and early years of widowhood, through the perils of her escape from Corsica, through the privations of her first months in France. During the years of prosperity, these qualities had lain dormant, and many of those about her had seen in her character little save that which moved

MARIA LETIZIA BONAPARTE, "MADAME MÈRE"

FROM THE PAINTING BY GÉRARD AT VERSAILLES

them to amusement and even to contempt: her parsimony, her vindictiveness towards those who offended her, her persistent blindness to the faults of her children, her foolish pretensions to titles and honours which the Emperor could not possibly have accorded without exposing both her and himself to well-merited ridicule. But now that adversity was at hand, they were to shine forth again, and to burn with undiminished brightness until the end.

For, at bottom, *Madame* was still the woman of '93. The lust of domination had turned Napoleon's head; vanity, luxury, or misplaced ambition had corrupted his brothers and sisters. But his mother was unchanged: the Corsican matron still, shrewd, tenacious, loyal, devoted.

She was quick to recognise that it was she alone who could hope to appease the discords in the Imperial Family, and rally her children to the support of the Emperor's crumbling throne; and, though the task was one of immense difficulty, she did not flinch from it. She wrote letter after letter to Joseph, Jérôme, and Louis, urging, imploring, commanding them to forget their grievances, real or imaginary, against the Emperor in the presence of the common danger, to be reconciled to him, and to do his bidding.

At the beginning of the New Year, Louis wrote to Napoleon, informing him that he was coming "to offer to his country, to him, and to his family what remained of his shattered health,

and every service that he was capable of rendering, *provided that he could do so with honour.*" This last phrase implied that he demanded, as the price of his support, the restoration of the kingdom which he had voluntarily abdicated in 1810, and which had been united to France. Napoleon very naturally refused to even consider such a proposition; but, at the same time, he begged Louis to return to France, as his duty towards his sovereign, his country, and his children imperatively demanded, and promised to receive him, "not as a brother whom he had offended, but as a brother who had brought him up." As the ex-king, however, showed no inclination to respond to the appeal which the Emperor made to his better feelings, *Madame* intervened and added her exhortations to those of Napoleon:

Paris, February 20, 1813

. . . The Emperor has read me the reply which he sent you. So far as I can judge, apart from the passage about Holland, you ought to be satisfied with it. He concludes by an earnest appeal to you to rejoin him in Paris, and I unite my exhortations to his to implore you not to refuse this invitation a second time. I ask it of you in the name of all that you hold dear, and as the strongest proof that you can give of your attachment to myself. If needs be, I command you as your mother. If I were able to entrust to paper all the weighty reasons which summon you to Paris, I am certain that you would not hesitate to quit your exile to return to your

family; but it is sufficient to tell you that your presence is most urgent, and much more necessary than you can conceive. Ignore every reason which may still keep you from us; listen only to the voice of Nature, and return to your family, who are in need of you at this moment. Circumstances, besides, could not be more favourable to you, and your arrival at this crisis will arouse as much admiration in Europe as the firmness of character you displayed three years ago. The public will applaud your noble devotion, and, besides, what consolation will you derive from seeing your children again, and watching over the education of the little Napoleon, who is so lovable, so interesting, and who already gives so much promise! He will make you forget, I do not doubt, all the past.

I will not repeat what I have said thousands of times in reference to myself. I shall owe to you peace and tranquillity, if you return. If you refuse, you will have to reproach yourself for having shortened the sorrowful remnant of my days, and with having caused me to descend into the grave without a regret for life.

Adieu, my dear son. Do not keep me waiting for your reply, and let it be in accordance with the wishes of my heart. I embrace you most tenderly.

But all her efforts were unavailing; the ridiculous pretensions of these crowned nonentities were proof alike against patriotism, gratitude, and reason. Louis continued to sulk in exile; Jérôme, his follies in Westphalia; Joseph, his disregard of Napoleon's instructions and his quarrels with

the French generals in Spain and the Minister for War in Paris. All three brothers seemed resolved to do everything in their power to precipitate the Emperor's fall, and their own return to the obscurity from which he had raised them.

In the spring of 1813, the Queen of Westphalia arrived in France, Jérôme, who desired to enjoy with more freedom the society of a new mistress, the Gräfin von Löwenstein-Wertheim, having induced her to leave Cassel for a time, on the pretext that Westphalia might soon become the scene of hostilities. Towards the end of May, she installed herself with *Madame* at Pont, where, despite her affection for her mother-in-law, she seems to have been extremely bored; and, indeed, Pont must have seemed to her like a convent, after the gaieties of Napoleonshöhe. However, the society of the good-natured German doubtless proved a consolation to her hostess during those anxious days, when the Emperor and his new army were waging that desperate campaign against the united hosts of Russia and Prussia which would have saved his throne and the better part of his conquests, had he consented to surrender the Illyrian provinces and his annexations on the Rhine and in North Germany.

Marie Louise, whose relations with *Madame* were always outwardly cordial, although there was, in truth, but little sympathy between them, was careful to transmit to her all the news from Saxony, and a few days after Napoleon's victory

at Bautzen (May 20 and 21, 1813), we find her writing to her mother-in-law as follows:

Saint-Cloud
25 May, 1813. 7 p.m.

My dear Mamma,

I have just received the news that the Emperor has gained a victory at Bautzen; he is well and was never in any danger.[1] I hope that this second battle, decisive like the first,[2] will bring us peace and the return of the Emperor. I should have many things to say to you still, but I will not defer for a moment the pleasure which my good news will occasion you.

I beg you to believe, my dear Mamma, in my tender affection.

Your very devoted daughter,
Louise[3]

At the beginning of July, when the conclusion of the armistice at Poischwitz had temporarily relieved her anxiety, *Madame* returned to Paris, and seems to have taken great interest in the efforts which were being made to succour the families of those who had fallen in the Russian and Saxon campaigns. *À propos* of this, Madame

[1] This was not the case. As the Allies were retiring, a round-shot from one of their guns plunged into the middle of the Emperor's staff, killing one general outright, and mortally wounding Duroc, Duc de Friuli, Grand Master of the Palace, Napoleon's dearest friend, who expired a few hours later.

[2] The first battle was fought on May 2, at Lutzen. Neither engagement was in any sense "decisive," the Allies retreating on each occasion in excellent order.

[3] Published by Baron Larrey, *Madame Mère.*

Ida Sainte-Elme relates an amusing story, which is so characteristic of Letizia that, notwithstanding the caution with which this chronicler's statements ought usually to be received, we are inclined to believe it.

Calling one day on *Madame*, with a letter from the Grand-Duchess of Tuscany, she found her seated at a long table, with over thirty little baskets and different kinds of beadwork before her.

"Do you know how to do this kind of work?" inquired her Highness.

"No, Madame."

"Neither do I. I buy them from one of those ladies, once rich, but now poor."

Then, turning to M. de Cossé-Brissac, who was present, she observed: "You remember, Cossé, my crippled lady's work; she was clever as a fairy. I am doing a kindness to this worthy woman, for all my ladies will take them. Don't you think so?"

M. de Brissac hastened to reply that a gift from *Madame Mère* must always be acceptable. Upon which, the old lady exclaimed:

"A gift, did you say? What can you be thinking of? I pay for them, but I make the others pay, too. Alas! my dear friend, it is very evident that you are not economical!" [1]

And yet, a few months before, when the Em-

[1] *Mémoires d'une Contemporaine;* Madame Tschudi, *Napoleon's Mother.*

peror returned from Russia, she had offered him a million francs out of her savings!

We have seen that, on more than one occasion, Pauline had made her health a pretext for going to the waters; but, when she started for Aix-les-Bains, at the beginning of June 1812, she was undoubtedly in very bad health, and, instead of taking with her, as was her usual custom, the greater part of her Household, an immense assortment of wonderful toilettes, and sufficient tiaras, necklaces, and bracelets to fill one of the jewellers' windows on the Quai des Orfèvres, she was accompanied by a very modest suite, and contented herself with a dozen comparatively simple gowns and a few diamonds. Little did she imagine that summer day, as the spires of Paris faded into the distance, that, though thirteen years of life still lay before her, she was never to behold them again!

Aix was very gay that summer. In addition to the members of the Imperial Family—Pauline, *Madame*, Fesch, and the Queen of Spain—the Duchesse d'Abrantès (Madame Junot), and de Raguse (Madame Marmont), Mesdames de Menou and Sémonville, and many other lights of Parisian society had selected it for their annual cure, while fashionable Bohemianism was represented by Forbin and the celebrated actor Talma. Pauline, however, was at first too unwell to take part in any of the balls, fêtes, and picnics, which

her friends were organising, and passed the greater part of the day on her *chaise-longue*, in an elegant demi-toilette of Indian muslin, receiving her courtiers with a languid smile, and talking of nothing but medicine and dietetics.

After a while, however, her health began to improve. Perhaps, the improvement ought to be attributed to the waters; perhaps, to the milk diet which the three doctors who were in constant attendance prescribed for their august patient; perhaps, to the delightful climate of Savoy; but certainly the presence at Aix of Commandant Auguste Duchand, of the Artillery, was not unconnected with it.

The commandant had lately returned from Spain, where he had been serving under Suchet, to nurse a wound received at the siege of Valentia, which had nearly cost him his life. He was a handsome man of about thirty years of age, with a reputation for dashing courage which had followed him over the Pyrenees; and Aix society soon decided that he was a most interesting person, and did all in its power to beguile the tedium of his convalescence. Pauline seems to have found him particularly interesting —was she not herself an invalid?—and ere long the gallant "gunner" had become a daily visitor at her Imperial Highness's villa, and the princess even occasionally found herself well enough to make excursions to Hautecombe or to organise

picnics on Lac Bourget, on which occasions she and the commandant generally contrived to occupy the same carriage or boat.

However, Duchand was, after all, merely a *pis aller;* for Pauline's heart—or, at least, the greater portion of that organ—still belonged to the absent Canouville, and had it been possible for that cavalier to undertake another of his adventurous rides, in order to throw himself at his mistress's feet, it is probable that the commandant would have very speedily received his *congé.* She had ordered for the absent one a sabre with a jewelled hilt, and wrote to David, the Intendant of her Household, bidding him take particular care that the diamonds were arranged exactly according to her instructions, and she maintained with the Grand Army as active a correspondence as circumstances would permit.

But, after a while, Canouville's letters suddenly ceased, and Pauline became very uneasy. She wrote to Paris to inquire if there were any news of him, but received only evasive answers. At length, however, towards the end of October, some one informed her that his name was mentioned in a certain journal of a certain date; nothing more. She sent for the journal in question, and found that it contained an account of the terrible battle of Borodino, fought on September 7th, and a list of the French officers who had been killed and wounded. Among the former, was the name of Canouville! The body of

the unfortunate officer had been found by one of the Emperor's aides-de-camp, who wrote to the princess's Intendant: "Canouville is no more, and, covered with blood, I found upon his breast a portrait, whose striking resemblance would have betrayed and compromised the original. I alone saw it and destroyed it."[1]

The tragic death of her lover was a terrible blow to Pauline, for, though, as we have observed elsewhere, she was incapable of harbouring any deep emotion for long, while it lasted, it was none the less poignant; and, for some days, she was "in an affliction of which it was impossible that anything could convey an adequate idea . . . . did nothing but weep, and refused all nourishment." As soon as she felt well enough to travel, she left Aix, and went to spend a few days with her uncle at the archiepiscopal palace at Lyons. From Lyons she proceeded to Marseilles, where she remained until the beginning of December, when, as the doctors insisted on her wintering in the South, she removed to Hyères.

Duchand had followed her to Provence, but, when he applied for an extension of his furlough, on the plea that he was not yet fit for duty, he met with a curt refusal—very possibly, the Emperor disapproved of the manner in which the gallant officer was spending his *congé de convalescence*—and he received orders to join the

[1] Published by M. Frédéric Masson, *Napoléon et sa famille.*

Grand Army immediately.[1] About the same time, his Majesty wrote to his sister, whom he always persisted in believing a *malade imaginaire* —though that was certainly not the case now— that he considered that it would be better for her to return to Paris, instead of wandering about the country at the bidding of the Faculty. This effectually disposes of the assertion made by several chroniclers that Pauline was then in disgrace at Court, and that her sojourn in Provence was not a voluntary one.

Duchand left Hyères about the middle of January, and, deprived of the consolation of his society, Pauline relapsed into a melancholy, nervous condition, and made the lives of her House hold a burden by her caprices. She was suddenly possessed by a mania for retrenchment, due, perhaps, to a presentiment of the evil days in store, dismissed a number of her servants in Paris and at Neuilly, reduced the salaries of her ladies-in-waiting, and, in short, cut down expenses in almost every direction, though she still continued to spend immense sums on jewellery.

In February, she left Hyères for Nice, but, if the Niçois had expected to see the Pauline of six years before reappear in their midst, they must have been greatly disappointed, for the light-

[1] He took part in both the Saxon campaigns, and greatly distinguished himself in the battles of Bautzen and Leipzig. His services were rewarded by the Golden Eagle of the Legion and the title of Baron of the Empire,

hearted princess whose amours and caprices had so much diverted them in 1807 was now a fractious invalid, who never quitted the grounds of her villa, refused to receive any visitors, and spent the greater part of her time in bed.

At the end of May, Pauline removed to Gréoulx, in the Pyrenees, where, it will be remembered, she had spent the summer and autumn of 1807, the greater part of the journey being made in a sedan-chair, as she was unable to bear the motion of a carriage. Since her previous visit, Gréoulx had become quite a fashionable resort, but she was still too ill to join in any of the gaieties of the place, and endeavoured to while away the time by dictating long letters to the different members of her family, and drawing up an elaborate code of regulations for the conduct of the subordinate members of her Household, any breach of which was to be punished by a fine, varying from three francs up to a louis.

In the middle of July, feeling somewhat better, she established herself in a country-house which had been lent her in the neighbourhood of Aix; but the third week in August found her back at Gréoulx. Since Canouville's death, it had been an established rule in her Household that on no account was any bad news to be communicated to the princess, and for some months this was rigidly observed. However, as her health improved, her entourage grew less discreet, and she

learned of the disasters which were overtaking the French Army in Saxony. Fearing that the Emperor might be in need of money, she ordered a magnificent diamond-necklace and other jewels to be sold, and offered the proceeds, amounting to 300,000 francs, to her brother. Her letter reached Napoleon a few days after the crowning disaster at Leipzig, and, though he declined the gift, he appears to have been much gratified that one at least among his relatives was not wholly ungrateful for all the benefits with which he had overwhelmed them.

For Elisa, the year 1812, so disastrous to Napoleon's cause, passed tranquilly enough, though the failure of the harvest of the previous autumn, joined to the burden of the Continental System, was causing widespread misery in Tuscany, and the quarrel between the clergy and the French authorities still continued. The news of the loss of the Grand Army, which reached her towards the end of December, does not appear to have caused her much alarm, and on Christmas Day we find her writing to the Emperor to felicitate him on his safe return, and to assure him that no part of his dominions was more submissive, more devoted, or more tranquil than Tuscany.

Perhaps, Élisa did not appreciate the probable effect of that calamity on her own position; any way, she did not permit it to interfere

with her plans for the embellishment of her palace at Lucca, nor for transmitting her glory to posterity; and, in the following spring, she posed before the Italian painter Benvenuti, who represented her surrounded by the ladies of her Court, the principal officers of her Household, and some of her artistic and literary *protégés*, who included Canova, Morghen, and Santarelli.[1]

In July, Élisa again visited Leghorn for a course of sea-bathing, and, on her return to Florence, was seized "*d'une maladie nouvelle, que l'on désigne du nom de coléra-morbus*," and was for some time very ill. In the meanwhile, signs of unrest had begun to manifest themselves on the coast of Tuscany, and particularly at Leghorn, where the hostility of the inhabitants to French domination was industriously fostered by British agents. Napoleon, from Dresden, wrote to the Grand-Duchess, enjoining her to take vigorous measures to suppress the first symptoms of insurrection, and to deport the leaders to Elba; but Élisa replied that "violent measures were alien to her nature," and contented herself by ordering the arrest of two prominent citizens of Leghorn, who had made

[1] This painting, a reproduction of which, thanks to the courtesy of M. Paul Marmottan, we have been enabled to reproduce in these volumes, was purchased, in 1857, by Napoleon III from the Pepoli family, in whose possession it had been for many years, and placed in the Tuileries. It was long believed to have been destroyed in the fire of 1871, but some years ago it was discovered in the Garde-Meuble.

Santarelli *Morghen* *Baron d'Alessandri* *Elisa* *B. Cenami* *Princesse Napoléone* *Benvenuti* *Fabre* *Canova* *Lucchesini* *Félix Baciocchi*

ÉLISA, GRAND-DUCHESS OF TUSCANY, IN THE MIDST OF HER COURT

AFTER THE PAINTING BY BENVENUTI

use of insulting language respecting the Emperor. She seems, indeed, whether from ignorance of the real state of affairs, or owing to the fond belief that her own authority was sufficient to curb any insurrectionary movement, to have persistently underrated the danger, and permitted a deputation, headed by Cardinal Zondadari, to go to Saxony to assure his Majesty that Tuscany would remain faithful.

The Emperor, reassured by these protestations, instead of reinforcing the French troops in Central Italy, recalled the most of those stationed there, and ordered their place to be supplied by a newly-raised corps of Italians, whose efficiency and loyalty were more than doubtful. The consequence was that, after Leipzig, Élisa found herself threatened both by the Austrians and the English, with practically no reliable troops to make head against them; and the Austrian general, Nugent, who, on November 15, landed at the mouth of the Po, with a composite force of Austrians, British and Calabrians, to the number of 3000, was able to occupy Ferrara without striking a blow, and push his advance posts as far as Malalbergo.

The Grand-Duchess, who was at Pisa, hurried to Florence, and sent to the Viceroy for assistance. Eugène despatched three battalions to Ferrara, whereupon Nugent evacuated the city, retreated to the coast, and re-embarked. But

his raid had clearly shown the helpless condition of Tuscany, and given an immense impetus to the insurrectionary movement; and it was followed by a general exodus of all the French who were not detained there by military or official duties.

CHAPTER XXXI

Caroline appointed Regent of Naples during the absence of Murat in Russia—Her prudent administration—Jealousy of her husband, who seeks to confine her authority within the narrowest limits—Murat abandons the wreck of the Grand Army at Posen, and returns to Naples—Indignation of the Emperor: his letters to Caroline and Murat—Murat, convinced that his throne is in jeopardy, enters into negotiations with both Austria and Great Britain—Caroline at first faithful to the Emperor, but eventually becomes her husband's accomplice, and ably seconds him in his criminal intrigues—Her hypocritical letters to Napoleon—Murat, summoned by the Emperor to join the army in Saxony, decides to obey—His motives—Skilful manœuvres of Caroline—After Leipzig, Murat begs the Emperor's permission to return to Naples, which is accorded him—Despatch of Aberdeen to Castlereagh—Napoleon, deceived by Murat, gives him a free hand in Italy—The King's plans interrupted by an ultimatum from Austria—The treaty of January 11, 1814—A comedy at the palace—Grief and indignation of Napoleon on learning of the treachery of his brother-in-law and sister.

BEFORE leaving Paris, on May 12, 1812, Murat had handed to Caroline a royal decree, which conferred upon her the regency of Naples during his absence with the Grand Army. That he did so with profound reluctance is obvious from the fact that he "reserved to himself the decision on all questions of government," and thus tied his consort's hands as tightly as he possibly could. However, after having until now been denied every vestige of

political power, except such as she had contrived to obtain by indirect means, and, latterly, even the consideration due to her rank, her Majesty was inclined to be thankful for small mercies, and she returned to Naples in the early days of June with very pleasurable anticipations.

The months which followed were probably the happiest, and certainly the most praiseworthy, of Caroline's whole career. Possessed of great pertinacity, an energy almost as untiring as Élisa's, a clear judgment, and remarkable shrewdness, she had hitherto found no opportunity of exercising her talents, save in tortuous and often none too reputable intrigues; but now at last she was to be afforded a chance of employing them in a more worthy field, and right well did she use it. The Ministers and all the officials with whom she was brought into contact were astonished at the readiness with which this woman, destitute of all political training, and wanting in even the most ordinary education, seemed to grasp the most technical details which were laid before her, at the soundness of her judgment, and at the fluency with which she expressed herself. "If a grave political question came under discussion," writes the Duchesse d'Abrantès [Madame Junot], who, as we have seen, had no cause to love her Majesty, "she would speak like a well-informed statesman."[1]

[1] *Mémoires.*

In short, she showed herself, from the very first, a consummate woman of affairs, infinitely more fitted for the difficult task of governing than her vain and unstable husband. Moreover, her private life would appear to have been quite above reproach, since she had no longer any need of lovers, whom, as we have seen, she had taken far more from calculation than from temperament.

The policy the Queen pursued was a sound and prudent one; that is to say, while in full accord with her husband in his desire to secure the emancipation of his crown, she remained attached to the French system against the Italian system, of which she recognised the dangers. "She is serving a noble apprenticeship in government," writes Norvins; "she brings to affairs an enlightened devotion and the desire never to separate the interests of the realm from those of the Empire."[1] At the same time, she took care to guard her independence, and any attempt on the part of the Imperial officials to encroach upon it was invariably met with a firm, though courteously-worded protest, which seems to have been far more efficacious than all Murat's extravagant denunciations, which had only served to provoke irritation and resentment.

However, she found herself hampered at every turn by the restrictions imposed upon her by her husband, who, informed by his confidants in

[1] Published by M. Masson, *Napoléon et sa famille.*

Naples of the admirable manner in which she was discharging the duties of her office, seems to have conceived the idea that she was trying to supplant him in the esteem of his people, and sought to confine her activity within even narrower limits than he had already marked out for her. He declined to confirm the nominations which she made; he either rejected altogether the propositions which she made to him, or adjourned their consideration till his return, notwithstanding the embarrassment which such a course entailed upon the Regent and the Ministers, and, in the hope of injuring his wife's popularity, he even insisted upon the imposition of certain taxes, which, when previously suggested to him, he had, rejected. "Public business is at a complete standstill," writes Mier to Metternich. ". . . It is enough for the Queen to desire anything for the King to refuse it."

On October 19, the Grand Army began its disastrous retreat from Moscow; and on December 5, at Smorgoni, Napoleon abandoned the command of the miserable wreck of his once mighty host to Murat and hurried off to Paris. This post Murat retained until the middle of January, when he wrote, from Posen, to the Emperor, protesting that "*la fièvre et une commencement de jaunisse bien prononcée*" reluctantly compelled him to leave the army. And, two days later, in spite of the entreaties of Berthier to await the Emperor's orders, he abandoned the

command to Eugène de Beauharnais and set out for Naples.[1]

Murat's abandonment of the army, and, indeed, his whole conduct during his command, has been severely criticised, both by his contemporaries and by historians, and some writers have even gone so far as to suggest that there was an understanding between him and the Russians. Of this, however, there is no direct evidence; certainly, what remained of the army were by no means the losers by the substitution of the Viceroy for "*l'homme le plus incapable de commander en chef sous tous les rapports.*"[2] His flight from Posen seems to have been due to several causes: the incessant quarrels with his subordinates, especially Davoust and Berthier; the knowledge that he was unfitted to bear the heavy responsibilities cast upon him; jealousy of Caroline's growing popularity and influence at Naples, and, above all, the belief that the Emperor would never recover from the staggering blow he had received, and that his return to Naples was imperative, if he wished to preserve his kingdom.

On the evening of January 31, 1813, Murat

[1] He had begged to be relieved of his command so far back as December 16, and added that, if he did not hear from the Emperor within a fortnight, he should set out on his journey. MM. Chavanon and Saint-Yves are therefore certainly in error when they assert that "nothing in the previous conduct of Murat foreshadowed this determination."

[2] Despatch of Berthier to the Emperor, December 16, 1812.

arrived at the Castle of San Lucio at Caserta, where he found the Queen and his children. Caroline does not seem to have been at all pleased at his arrival; she disapproved of his abandoning his post, and, on learning, from his letters, that such was his intention, had written strongly urging him to remain.[1] As for the King, his manner towards his wife was cold and constrained, and almost his first act was to order a favourite equerry of her Majesty to retire from Court and join his regiment, which naturally gave rise to a good deal of gossip.

He had soon, however, matters of far more importance to occupy his attention than the conduct of the Queen.

The Emperor was furious at his brother-in-law's desertion of his post, and, though Murat, in a letter which he addressed to him immediately on his return to Naples, insisted that the state of his health had rendered it absolutely impossible for him to remain with the army, refused to accept his explanation; and, on January 24, he wrote to Caroline as follows:

[1] This letter, which was written on January 15—that is to say, two days before Murat left Posen, and so, of course, never reached him—shows that Caroline, at that moment, believed that interest was in accord with duty, and is in itself a sufficient refutation of M. Turquan's assertion that the Queen, immediately on learning of the loss of the Grand Army in Russia, decided that the Empire was doomed, and, without even waiting for the return of her husband, entered into secret negotiations with both Austria and Great Britain. It has been published by M. Weil, in his interesting work *le prince Eugène et Murat*, and also by M. Masson, *Napoléon et sa famille.*

The King of Naples, your husband, abandoned the Army on the 16th! He is a brave man on the battlefield, but he is feebler than a woman or a monk when the enemy is not in sight. He has no moral courage. I charge you to convey to him the displeasure which I have experienced at his conduct in this matter.

And to Murat he wrote, two days later:

I do not intend to speak to you of my displeasure at your conduct since my departure from the Army, as it has its origin in the infirmity of your character. At the same time, I deemed it necessary to open my mind on the subject to the Queen. You are a good soldier on the battlefield, but, beyond that, you have neither energy nor decision. I suppose you are not among those who think that the lion is dead. If such is your calculation, it will prove false. You have done all the harm you could since my departure from Wilna. The title of King has turned your head. If you desire to preserve it—this title—you will have to conduct yourself differently from what you have done up to the present. The occasion of rehabilitating yourself in my estimation cannot be long in presenting itself.

Nor did his Imperial Majesty confine the expression of his displeasure to letters, and his refusal to confirm the donation of the Principality of Ponte-Corvo to Achille Murat, which he had promised his father during the Russian campaign, until the boy should take an oath of allegiance in person; his cancelling of all the promotions made

by Murat after the Emperor's departure from the army; the terms in which he announced, in the *Moniteur*, the resignation of his brother-in-law's command, and his instructions to the French Ambassador at Naples to demand his passports, if the King refused to send to Verona six battalions which he required of him to reinforce the Army of the Adige,—all pointed to profound distrust and irritation, and seemed to have convinced Murat that, whatever might be the ultimate solution of the problem which confronted Europe, his own throne was not worth a year's purchase, unless he took immediate steps to safeguard it.

The limits of our space will not permit of our attempting to describe here the intrigues of which Naples was the centre during the ensuing months: negotiations with Austria, in which Murat first sought to obtain a guarantee which would ensure the preservation of his crown, in return for what would have practically amounted to an attitude of neutrality in the struggle between Napoleon and the Allied Powers, but which were eventually to assume a far more reprehensible character; negotiations with Lord William Bentinck and the British Government, criminal from the first;[1] and

[1] They were carried on in the Isle of Ponza, which the British had seized at the end of February 1813. Murat's agents were Giuseppe Cerculi, an employé of the Minister of Police, Robert Jones, an English merchant long resident at Naples, and Felice Nicolas, keeper of the Neapolitan Archives and formerly secretary to Acton.

negotiations with the Italian patriots. And we shall therefore confine ourselves to endeavouring to determine the degree of responsibility which attaches to Caroline.

Contrary to what M. Turquan asserts—on what authority it would be interesting to learn—Caroline, far from having drawn her husband into these criminal intrigues, remained faithful to the Emperor until the early summer of 1813, not, we may well believe, from any sentiment of loyalty or gratitude to the brother to whom she was under such immense obligations, but simply because she still inclined to the belief that her duty coincided with her interests. M. Masson is of opinion that she was still in ignorance of the real character of the negotiations with Great Britain at the end of June, at which date, however, it is certain that she was not only aware of the Austrian negotiations, but cordially approved of them, for, on the 29th, we find Mier writing to Metternich: "*Their* Majesties await with impatience the answer to the proposition of Cariati [Murat's representative at Vienna], in order to know what course to pursue in the event of war between France and Austria. The King is still disposed to support our interests."

This, as MM. Chavanon and Saint-Yves point out, is the first official intimation we have that the Queen had become the accomplice of her husband, and they attribute her change of front to the menacing attitude assumed by the

Emperor, who had discovered, at the end of May, the real object of Cariati's mission to Vienna,[1] and whose eyes had lately been opened, by an article in the London *Morning Chronicle* of June 11 to the suspiciously-amicable relations existing between the Neapolitan Government and the British in Ponza.[2] In our opinion, however, it would be wiser to ascribe it to the fact that Murat had just received intimation from the War Office in Paris that Austria was about to enter the Coalition against France.

If Caroline had hesitated to accord her support to the anti-French policy of her husband, when once she had decided on that course, Murat found in her an invaluable auxiliary. She cast her spells over Mier, the Austrian Ambassador—an impressionable young man of twenty-six—as she had cast them over Junot, Metternich, and Daure, and employed the influence she acquired

[1] On June 3, the day before signing the fatal armistice of Poischwitz, he had sent a note to the Neapolitan Government insisting on Cariati's recall.

[2] "Advices from Sicily were received yesterday to the 8th of April, and we learn, with considerable surprise, that there seems to be some appearance of friendly and commercial arrangement between Lord Wm. Bentinck and the Ministers of Murat, at Naples. A cessation of hostilities has been agreed upon between Sicily and Naples; and, in a letter of the 7th of April from Messina, it is stated that the intercourse has been re-established with the islands in the bays of Gaeta and Naples, and that there was a prospect of a beneficent trade with the Continent, through the medium of those settlements. It will be curious if another French marshal, raised to a throne, is to be ranked among our friends or allies. Has the mission of Beauharnais to Milan any relation to the supposed defection of Murat?"

over the youthful diplomatist to extract from him some very useful information concerning the intentions of his Government. She so completely hoodwinked her old friend Durand that, almost up to the last, he still believed her loyal to the interests of France. Finally, she employed her innate talent for dissimulation to deceive the Emperor—this brother who had raised her from the most abject poverty to set her among princes! —and it is impossible to read without disgust the hypocritical letters filled with assurances of the most unflinching loyalty, the most whole-hearted devotion, which she addressed to him at the very time when she and her husband were in constant communication with his enemies. In one, after denying in the most positive terms that Murat had had any treasonable relations whatever with either Austria or Great Britain, she thus concludes:

"I shall not add anything, Sire, except that no one in the world is more strongly and more inviolably attached to you than the King. To love you, to serve you, is for him a necessity. You will always find him ready against your enemies, and always worthy of your affection and confidence."

Her efforts were but too successful. If, during the armistice of Poischwitz, Napoleon, convinced of the treachery of his brother-in-law, had decided to dethrone him, he could have done so without difficulty, for, as the King's negotiations

with Austria and Great Britain had as yet led to no definite result, it is unlikely that either would have stirred a finger to help him. But the letters he received from Caroline, and the despatches of Durand, whom the Queen had so cleverly duped, seem to have partially reassured him; and he therefore contented himself by continuing to press for the despatch of the Neapolitan contingent to the Army of the Adige, and by threatening to withdraw his Ambassador from Naples if his demands were not complied with.

On July 26th, a courier from Dresden arrived at Naples, with a letter in the Emperor's own hand, ordering the King to join him. The spring campaign in Saxony had impressed Napoleon with the necessity of securing his brother-in-law's services to lead the cavalry, the officers of which were demanding to know why he was not at their head. After a long conference with his wife, Murat decided to obey, and, on August 2, having again confided the regency to Caroline, he set out for Saxony.

Several writers attribute his response to the Emperor's summons to a reluctance to abandon Napoleon's cause, and pretend that, at the call of duty, he temporarily renounced his treacherous intentions, and became once more the loyal soldier of Aboukir, Austerlitz, Jena, and Friedland.[1]

[1] MM. Chavanon and Saint-Yves are of this opinion, and assert that, but for "the ridiculous obstinacy of the implacable tyrant, deaf too long to the voice of reason and of affection," Murat would never have entered into negotiations with the Emperor's enemies.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Murat obeyed the Emperor's summons, not because "honour called him," but because it was the only course open to him. He had as yet received no definite assurances from either Austria or Great Britain, and until he did so, it would have been obviously the height of folly to break with Napoleon. Moreover, he seems to have been in receipt of information from Germany that the Congress which had met at Prague on July 12 might succeed in arranging terms of peace, and that it was strongly advisable for him to be at hand, in order to protect his own interests.

And his absence did not interrupt the negotiations with England and Austria; they still continued, even while Murat was leading the French cavalry with his usual dashing valour, and risking his life a dozen times a day for the sovereign whom he was on the point of betraying. He and his wife were now in complete accord, and the latter manœuvred with an address, which, had it been employed for a less detestable end, it would be difficult not to admire: inventing pretext after pretext to justify her husband's continued refusal to send his troops to reinforce the Army of the Adige; contriving means to retain Mier at Naples and Cariati at Vienna, contrary to all diplomatic usage—since Naples and Austria were nominally at war—and in spite of reiterated orders from the Emperor;

hastening to give proof of her loyalty by sending 10,000 men to assist in repelling a British landing at Porto d'Anzio, which, as she was no doubt aware, was merely a raid, and, in short, gaining all she wanted without compromising herself with France and without sacrificing anything.

Fortune, which had smiled fitfully upon Napoleon at the opening of the autumn campaign, soon averted her face. The Emperor's dearly-bought success at Dresden was altogether neutralised by the successive defeats of Regnier at Grossbeeren, of Girard at Hagelberg, of Macdonald at the Katzbach, of Ney at Dennewitz, and of Vandamme at Kulm; and in mid-October these disasters culminated in that terrific combat —or rather series of combats—around Leipzig, known as the Battle of the Nations. On the 19th, Murat accompanied the Emperor in his retreat, but, on the 24th, when they reached Erfurt, he informed him that he had received a letter urging him to return immediately to Naples, and demanded permission to leave the army. He pointed out that he could serve his Majesty to better purpose in Italy, and engaged that, immediately on his arrival, he would lead in person the contingent which the Emperor had so vainly demanded of him to the assistance of the Viceroy's army. Napoleon consented, and, that same day, Murat took leave of his brother-in-law, whom he was never to see again, and set out for Naples.

The King had certainly received an urgent letter, but it was not from Naples but from Lord Aberdeen, the British Ambassador at the Austrian Court, and Metternich, in confirmation of a despatch which he had received from Cariati, on the 16th, announcing that Great Britain and Austria were prepared to obtain from Ferdinand IV his renunciation of the throne of Naples and guarantee that throne and his independence to Murat, provided that he would leave the French army and abstain from sending troops to the assistance of the Viceroy of Italy.[1] On November 10, Aberdeen wrote to Castlereagh as follows:

"As soon as he [Murat] received the last communication addressed to him by Prince Metternich and myself at Prague, he wrote to Napoleon and stated that the affairs of his kingdom absolutely demanded his presence. Without waiting for an answer,[2] he immediately began his journey

[1] M. Turquan states that, *five days after* the disaster of Leipzig, Murat secretly visited the camp of the Allies, where he had an interview with Mier, *formerly* Austrian Ambassador at Naples, "and showed himself disposed to enter into the views of the Coalition," after which he returned to the French lines and requested the Emperor's authority to set out for Italy. Well, five days after Leipzig, that is to say October 24, Murat was at Erfurt, and Mier still Ambassador at Naples, which he did not leave until November 14! M. Turquan further adds, apparently on the authority of Pasquier, that Napoleon learned of this supposed interview, and despatched a courier in all haste to the Minister of Police, with orders that, if Murat travelled by way of Paris, he was to be arrested and incarcerated at Vincennes. But Napoleon, as we shall show, was not undeceived in regard to his brother-in-law until much later.

[2] This, as we have seen, is incorrect.

and did not halt for a moment until he arrived at Basle. While on the road, he sent a ciphered despatch to Prince Cariati, his Minister at Vienna, in which he informs him that he hopes to be at Naples on the 4th of the month: that he burns with desire to revenge himself of [*sic*] all the injuries he has received from Bonaparte, and to connect himself with the cause of the Allies in contending for a just and stable peace. He proposes to declare war on the instant of his arrival."[1]

Murat, despite the breakdown of his travelling-carriage in the snows of the Simplon, duly reached his capital on the date he had mentioned to Cariati; but, if Aberdeen and Metternich really expected him to declare openly for the Allies immediately on his arrival, their calculations were altogether misplaced. At Milan, where he found the population in great alarm at the retreat of the Viceroy's army, which, after a vain attempt to hold the line of the Isonzo against a superior Austrian force under Bellegarde, had been compelled to fall back to the Adige, his appearance had been welcomed by frantic acclamations, and he had been hailed as the "Saviour of Italy." This reception convinced him that the mere preservation of his kingdom of Naples was far too modest a price to set upon his honour, and he determined to play for a much higher stake.

He accordingly set his agents to work among

[1] Published by Dr. J. Holland Rose, *Life of Napoleon I.*

the Italian patriots, and, when he judged that affairs were sufficiently advanced, wrote to the Emperor, declaring that the only possible means to preserve Italy was to proclaim its unity and independence under some one whom he [Napoleon] should select, that is to say, the King of Naples:

"Since the defection of the Confederation of the Rhine, since the disaster of Leipzig, the Austrians can reinforce their Army of Italy to any extent they please. What can the 30,000 men of which I am able to dispose effect against them? It is no longer armies that ought to be opposed to the Austrians in Italy; it is a moral force, an invincible force, that which the hope of seeing Italy united in a single nation must inspire in every Italian."

It was an astute move, as well as a bold one. If the Emperor, relying on his brother-in-law's good-faith, were to permit him to occupy with his army Imperial Italy up to the Po, and also to retain under his command, at any rate for a time, the French troops by which the principal towns were still garrisoned, Murat would find himself in an exceedingly favourable position, since he could then treat with the Allies on the basis of the *Uti Possidetis*, and even if he were unable to obtain from them the cession of the whole territory in his possession as the price of his support, he could scarcely fail to secure a considerable portion of it.

Although Murat's letters contained no mention

of any intention on his part to place the Italian forces at the disposition of the Emperor after the national rising which he so confidently predicted had driven the Austrians over the Alps, Napoleon seems to have believed that an alliance with France would naturally follow, and, though he did not formally accept his brother-in-law's proposition, he decided to allow him a free hand in Italy. Having therefore taken the precaution to send Fouché to Naples, to keep an eye on Murat's actions and to engage him to despatch the promised contingent without delay to the assistance of the Viceroy, he sent instructions to the French authorities in Italy to give free passage to the Neapolitan army, which was thus enabled to take possession of Rome, Ancona, and several places of minor importance.

That Murat would have succeeded in occupying the whole of Imperial Italy without encountering any resistance from the French, there can, we think, be no doubt, since the Emperor appears to have been completely deceived by his brother-in-law's specious letters, and by the assurances he received from Fouché, who was playing his usual double game. But, unfortunately for the success of the King's schemes, the Allies, with whom he was still coquetting, began to grow seriously alarmed, and on the night of December 30–31, the Graf von Neipperg, afterwards the second husband of Marie Louise, who,

as Minister of Austria at Stockholm, had negotiated the entry of Bernadotte into the Coalition, arrived at Naples with an ultimatum from his Government.

Neipperg was instructed to represent that Austria would no longer suffer the neutrality of Naples, and that, if the King persisted in remaining neutral, she would immediately break off all diplomatic relations and hold herself free to commence hostilities against him. If, on the other hand, Murat were prepared to become an active member of the Coalition, Austria, on her side, would not only guarantee his present dominions, and do everything in her power to procure his recognition by England and a formal renunciation from the King of Sicily of his possessions on the mainland, but would engage to procure him "a more advantageous frontier," as an indemnity for his efforts in the common cause.

Murat, however, was reluctant to abandon his dream of becoming the chief of a united Italy, and he found a pretext for delay in the conduct of Lord William Bentinck, Ambassador Extraordinary at the Court of Palermo and Commander-in-Chief of the British Forces in Sicily, who declined to sign the treaty on behalf of Great Britain, on the ground that he had received no instructions from his Government, although, as a matter of fact, he had in his pocket orders from Castlereagh for the imme-

diate conclusion of the proposed treaty with the King of Naples.[1]

Now, however, Caroline intervened. In their resolve to guard their crown, no matter at what price, to treat with Austria or England against the Emperor and France, husband and wife were in complete accord; both were devoured by ambition, both equally untrammelled by scruple. Where, however, they differed was in regard to the course to be followed. Murat, vain, rash and headstrong, was eager for the conquest and possession of Italy; Caroline, shrewd, calm, and calculating, was disposed to accept what Austria offered, lest by aiming too high they should lose all. Moreover, her old relations with Metternich, and her more recent intimacy with Mier, naturally inclined her to a treaty with Austria, and she used every conceivable argument to persuade her husband to take the same view.

[1] Bentinck's whole conduct in the matter was most extraordinary, since, despite the remonstrances of Neipperg and repeated orders from the British Government, he persisted in his refusal to sign a treaty which was "a sad violation of all public and private principle"; and all that the Allies eventually got out of him was an armistice. Mr. Walter Frewin Lord, in an interesting article in the *Nineteenth Century* (October 1900), entitled "The Story of Murat and Bentinck," arrives at the conclusion that the only possible explanation of Bentinck's continued disregard of his instructions is that he was endeavouring—entirely on his own initiative—to induce Ferdinand to offer to cede Sicily to Great Britain, in return for an indemnity in Italy or a monetary compensation, in order that he might rule the island as viceroy; and therefore naturally desired to re-establish that potentate at Naples.

She prevailed, and on January 11, 1814, Gallo, on behalf of the King, and Mier and Neipperg, in the name of the Emperor Francis, signed a treaty, whereby Murat agreed to place at the disposal of the Coalition a contingent of 30,000 men, to serve only in Italy; while the Emperor of Austria guaranteed to Murat and his dynasty the sovereignty entire and free of all the States which he then possessed in Italy. Secret articles contained the engagement of the Emperor of Austria to employ every possible means to obtain the renunciation of the King of Sicily to the realm of Naples; Murat, on his side, renouncing all claims to Sicily and consenting to give an indemnity to its sovereign. Further, the Austrian Government agreed to obtain Great Britain's consent to the treaty, and to procure Murat a territorial compensation in Italy for the efforts he would make in favour of the Coalition. Finally, an additional article stipulated the nature of the compensation, which was to be territory in the Roman States with a population of not less than 400,000.

It seems difficult to reconcile Murat's treachery to his benefactor and his country—treachery which, as we have seen, was not the outcome of any sudden impulse, but of long months of tortuous intrigue—with his conduct on the morning of the day on which the treaty was to be made public. Madame Récamier, who was then at Naples, happened to be alone with her old

friend the Queen, in the latter's apartments in the palace, when the door opened and the King, deadly pale, with disordered hair, eyes rolling wildly, and, to all appearance, under the influence of some overwhelming emotion, hurriedly entered the room. Rushing up to Madame Récamier, he seized her by both her hands, and having somewhat incoherently explained the situation in which he was placed, concluded by pathetically inquiring what course she would advise him to adopt.

The lady, under the impression that he had not yet committed himself irrevocably, urged him to follow that which honour dictated. "Sire," said she, "you are a Frenchman. It is to France that you owe allegiance."

"Then I am a traitor!" cried the King, and opening a window which overlooked the sea, he pointed to the British ships entering the Bay, after which he covered his face with his hands and burst into tears.

Caroline ran towards him, exclaiming: "In the name of Heaven, Joachim, be silent, or, at least, speak lower! In the next room there are a hundred ears ready to catch every word you utter. Be silent! Have you lost all self-control?" Then, finding that her words produced no effect upon her husband, she went to a table, filled a glass from a carafe of orange-flower water, poured some drops of ether into it, and brought it to the distracted monarch.

"Drink this and compose yourself," said she. "Murat, remember what you are! You are King of Naples. Do not lose sight of the duty you owe to your subjects and your family."

After a time, Murat grew calmer, and left the room to remove the traces of his emotion. No sooner had the door closed behind him, than the Queen threw herself into Madame Récamier's arms, and, with tears in her eyes, exclaimed: "You see I am obliged to have courage for him as well as for myself. At a time, too, when my courage is barely sustained by my affection for my children —when I am hourly distracted by thinking of my brother, who believes me guilty of treason towards him. Oh! pity me! I have need of pity, and I deserve it. If you could search my heart, you would understand what torture I am doomed to bear." [1]

Even allowing for the probability that Madame Récamier's biographers have embroidered to some extent the account which she gave them of this scene, it remains a memorable one. Nevertheless, when we peruse the hypocritical letters to the Emperor, in which Murat subsequently sought to extenuate his betrayal, we are forced to the belief that, from first to last, it was nothing but a clever piece of acting, designed by the guilty pair—both adepts in the art of dissimulation—to persuade Madame Récamier, and, through her, her many

[1] Madame Lenormant, *Souvenirs et Correspondance de Madame Récamier;* Duchesse d' Abrantès, *Mémoires.*

influential friends in France, that they had acted entirely under constraint.

When Napoleon learned of the treachery of his brother-in-law and sister, he was overwhelmed with grief and indignation. "Murat!" he cried, "Murat! my brother-in-law in open treason! I was well aware that he was wrong-headed, but I believed that he loved me. It is his wife who is the cause of his defection. Caroline! My sister! Murat causes his cannon to be fired on the French troops! It is abominable! It is odious! He is the Bernadotte of the South!"

And, a day or two later, he wrote to Fouché, of whose complicity in this shameful business he was as yet in ignorance:

I have received your various letters. The conduct of the King of Naples is infamous, and for that of the Queen there is no name. I hope to live long enough to avenge myself and France for such frightful ingratitude.

CHAPTER XXXII

France invaded—*Madame Mère* appointed a member of the Council of Regency during the Emperor's absence with the Army—The Allies approach Paris—Departure of the Imperial Family for Blois—Napoleon decides to abdicate—*Madame* and Marie Louise—*Madame* and Fesch set out for Rome—Meeting between Pauline and the Emperor during the latter's journey to Fréjus—Napoleon sails for Elba—Élisa, in the hope of preserving Lucca and Piombino, negotiates with Murat, and associates herself in his treason—The Neapolitan troops admitted to Florence—Departure of Élisa for Lucca: tumultuous scenes—Evacuation of Tuscany by the French troops—Élisa announces that she has severed all connection with the Empire, and proceeds to annex several outlying districts of the Kingdom of Italy—Her hopes of preserving her principality frustrated by Bentinck, who expels her from Lucca—She goes to France, but, after the abdication of Napoleon, returns to Italy and settles at Bologna—Birth of a son.

THE year 1814 arrived. The Grand Empire was no more; the Allies had already crossed the Rhine; the catastrophe which Letizia Bonaparte had so long foreseen and dreaded was at hand. Many there were who still believed that, even now at the eleventh hour, a peace would be arranged which would allow of Napoleon retaining the Crown of France; but *Madame* knew the pride and obstinacy of her son's nature too well to cherish any such illusion. Perhaps, since their characters were in many respects so very similar, she sympathised with his

intention to continue the struggle so long as he had a single battalion at his back, rather than consent to what he considered an ignominious surrender to his enemies. "I shall not complain," said she to Cambacérès, "how this terminates, provided that the Emperor retires from it without any loss of honour; for to fall is nothing, when one makes a noble end; to fall is everything, when one makes a dishonourable one."[1] When, on January 23, two days before the Emperor quitted Paris for Châlons-sur-Marne, to open the most glorious of all his campaigns, he named his mother one of the Council of Regency, Joseph, the ex-King of Spain, who, chiefly through *Madame's* efforts, had been reconciled to Napoleon, being appointed Lieutenant-General of France.

The succession of victories gained by the Emperor and his heroic conscripts—Champeaubert (February 10), Montmirial (February 11), Vauchamp (February 14), Montmereau (February 18)—achieved nothing beyond demonstrating once again the genius of the great captain, and the superiority of the French soldier of that epoch over those of the other nations of the Continent. For Napoleon's fatal obstinacy caused him to reject with scorn the old boundaries of France offered by the Allies at Châtillon, and to fight on desperately, in the vain hope of securing to her the "natural" frontiers, which he might have had as a present after Leipzig.

[1] Baron Larrey, *Madame Mère*.

On March 23, the Allied Grand Army, having wisely decided to ignore Napoleon's incursions on its rear, on which the Emperor had staked all his hopes of success, began its advance upon Paris; and, on the 29th, arrived at Bondy, within striking distance of the capital. Joseph thereupon resolved to send the Empress and the King of Rome to Blois, in conformity with instructions he had received from the Emperor, who had twice warned him to transfer the seat of government to the south of the Loire, if the Allies neared Paris, and in no case to allow his wife and son to fall into the hands of the enemy; and, in spite of the opposition of the Council of Regency, who represented that such a measure would take all the heart out of the defence, he persisted in this determination. The Empress and the King of Rome accordingly left Paris that same day, preceded by the ex-Queen of Westphalia and followed, at a few hours' interval, by *Madame* and Louis. Louis, it may be mentioned, had arrived in Paris on New Year's Day, and had taken up his quarters at his mother's hôtel, where he had persisted in remaining, although the Emperor, irritated at his ridiculous pretension to be still considered King of Holland, had ordered him to quit the capital.[1]

The Imperial Family, who had joined forces at

[1] Baron Larrey observes that Louis was "prepared for sacrifices compatible with the dignity of his situation," whatever that may mean. To an unprejudiced observer, his conduct seems to have been profoundly contemptible.

Rambouillet, reached Blois in the late afternoon of April 2, after a trying journey—incessant rain having rendered the road from Paris almost impassable for heavy vehicles—much to the astonishment of the inhabitants, who had received no intimation of their coming. The Hôtel de Ville was hastily converted into a residence for the Empress and her son, while *Madame* accepted the hospitality of one of the principal citizens.

Late on the night of March 30, the Emperor, hurrying back to the relief of his capital, learned that, a few hours previously, after a day of sanguinary fighting, Paris had capitulated. The desertion of Marmont's corps of 12,000 men, on April 5, destroyed his last chance of continuing the unequal struggle, and on the morrow he decided to abdicate. Two days later, Schouwaloff, one of the Czar's aides-de-camp, accompanied by the Baron de Saint-Aignan, brother-in-law of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Caulaincourt, arrived at Blois to conduct Marie Louise and the King of Rome to Rambouillet, where the Allied Sovereigns awaited her. Before leaving, *Madame* tells us, the Empress begged her mother-in-law to accompany her to Vienna, but "I thanked her and replied that I should never separate from my children."[1]

The same day (Holy Saturday), *Madame* left Blois for Orléans, where she was met by Fesch. On arriving there, her *Dame d'honneur*, Madame

[1] *Souvenirs dictés à Rome.*

THE EMPRESS MARIE LOUISE

FROM THE PAINTING BY GÉRARD AT VERSAILLES

de Fontanges, tendered her resignation, an example which was followed by the other ladies who had followed her from Paris. On April 9, furnished with passports from the Mayor of Orléans, *Madame* and the cardinal set out for Rome, where they arrived on the night of May 12. The restored pontiff had generously offered an asylum to the family of his persecutor and received *Madame* with the utmost kindness. "Welcome, my daughter," said he, at their first interview; "welcome to this city, which has always proved a refuge for the fugitive."

Pauline had spent the winter of 1814 at Nice; but, at the beginning of the spring, she removed to a villa near Orgon, which she had rented from a M. Charles, a member of the Corps Législatif. Having strictly enjoined upon her entourage that on no account were they to communicate to her any bad news, and that the first who transgressed in this respect must quit her service, she was still quite unaware that the Emperor had abdicated, when, in the early afternoon of April 26, a courier arrived at the villa and announced that his Majesty was close at hand. Napoleon had quitted Fontainebleau on the 23rd, in charge of the Commissioners of the Allies, Colonel (afterwards Sir Neil) Campbell, Schouwaloff, General Köller, and the Graf von Waldeburg-Truchsess, and was on his way to the Mediterranean to embark for Elba. In the central districts, he was

greeted with the usual acclamations, but, after leaving Lyons, the attitude of the people changed, and at Orange stones were hurled at his carriage, and it was only with great difficulty that a passage could be forced through the infuriated rabble. Learning that similar demonstrations were to be expected at Avignon and Orgon, at which latter town the populace had erected a gibbet, on which they had hung an effigy of their late ruler smeared with blood, and placarded with the words: "*Voilà donc l'odieux tyran! Tôt ou tard le crime est puni*," the Commissioners persuaded him to don "a plain great coat, a Russian cloak, and a plain round hat with a white cockade," which he subsequently exchanged for the great-coat and fur cap of General Köller, the Austrian Commissioner.[1] It seems to have been in this last disguise that he presented himself to his sister, who is said to have greeted him with the naïve exclamation: "*Oh! Napoléon, qu'avez vous fait?*"[2]

The Emperor spent some hours at his sister's villa, and Pauline—the only member of the family, save *Madame*, who entertained for him any real affection—spared no effort to console him. She even proposed to accompany him to Elba, and, with this intention, followed him as far as Huy, a

[1] Sir Neil Campbell, *Journal*.

[2] She is also said to have refused to embrace him until he had doffed the Austrian uniform, and that the Emperor, to humour her, retired into an adjoining room and assumed the uniform of the Guides; but this seems a little difficult to believe.

few leagues from Fréjus. Napoleon, however, refused to allow her to share his exile at present, though a few months later we shall find her in Elba. On April 28, he set sail from Fréjus—the little port where he had landed, fifteen years before, on his return from Egypt—and on May 4 arrived at Porto Ferrajo.

Élisa's loyalty to the Emperor, like that of Caroline, did not survive his good fortune. When Caulaincourt was starting for the Congress of Châtillon, Napoleon instructed him to do everything possible to preserve Lucca and Piombino for his sister; but that lady, recognising the hopelessness of defending Tuscany, had already, apparently on the advice of Fouché, entered into negotiations with Murat, and, in return for an assurance from him that she should remain in undisturbed possession of her principality, had associated herself with his treason and had agreed to sell to the Coalition the States whose government and defence the Emperor had entrusted to her.

Accordingly, towards the end of January, the greater part of the scanty French garrison of Florence was transferred to Pisa, and, on the last day of the month, a detachment from Murat's army appeared before the walls and demanded admission. Élisa, for the sake of appearances, at first refused and sent off her daughter, the Princess Napoléone, to Lucca; but, a few hours

later, protesting that she yielded only to save useless bloodshed, she ordered the gates to be opened, and the Neapolitans marched in, amid the acclamations of the populace.

Unfortunately for Élisa, she acted her part a little too well, and the Florentines, believing that she had really wished to oppose the entry of those whom they regarded as their deliverers from the Napoleonic yoke, were greatly incensed. An angry crowd surrounded the Palazzo Pitti, and would have forced its way in and ejected the Grand-Duchess and her Household, if the Mayor had not intervened, and persuaded the people to disperse, by telling them that her Highness was on the point of quitting Florence. This Élisa, who was greatly alarmed, did the very next day; nevertheless, she was not permitted to make a peaceful exit. A raging mob beset her carriage, loading her with insults and pelting her with filth; and the gendarmes who escorted her were compelled to clear a passage with their sabres before she could contrive to escape its unwelcome attentions. It was remarked that the mob was by no means wholly composed of the disorderly elements of the population; perhaps some of the aspiring artists whose claims to her patronage the Grand-Duchess had overlooked had taken advantage of the occasion to express their resentment at her neglect.

Élisa retired to Lucca, whence she issued

orders for the evacuation of all the Tuscan towns still occupied by the French. Then, having persuaded her husband that the best thing for him to do would be to retire to France and appoint her Regent of their principality, she formally announced that she had broken off all connection with the Empire and intended to assure the independence of her States, and ordered the French cockade to be replaced by that of Lucca. This done, she complacently awaited the reward of her treason: the guarantee of her principality by the Allies which Murat had promised her; and, in the meanwhile, occupied her time by quietly annexing several outlying districts of the Kingdom of Italy, which, in the past, she had unsuccessfully endeavoured to persuade the Emperor to bestow upon her, "like a sailor who, on a sinking ship, steals his captain's pocket-handkerchiefs."[1]

Murat had flattered himself that he would have little difficulty in obtaining from the Allies the guarantee of his sister-in-law's principality, particularly now that his troops were practically in possession of Tuscany; but he had not taken the implacable Bentinck into his calculations. On March 9, that officer, who cared neither for Murat, nor for the Austrians, nor for the orders of his own Government, landed at Leghorn, at the head of an Anglo-Sicilian force, and placed a garrison there, in spite of the protestations of

[1] M. Frédéric Masson, *Napoléon et sa famille.*

the King of Naples, after which, he marched on Lucca with 2,000 men. Élisa sent the elder Lucchesini and her secretary Lambert to remonstrate with him, but to their representations Bentinck curtly replied: "If you do not send that woman away at once, I will have her arrested and conducted to the frontier."

When the envoys returned and reported this ungallant speech to their mistress, she was highly indignant. But, as the Luccan troops, though much superior in numbers to Bentinck's force, seemed to be of opinion that discretion was the better part of valour, she had no choice except to yield; and, on March 13, she bade farewell to Lucca and to her dreams of greatness, and set out for Genoa, where her husband had lately been appointed to the command of the garrison. This post Félix hastened to resign, and he and Élisa returned to France, by way of Turin and Chambéry. On reaching Montpellier, however, they learned that the Emperor had abdicated, whereupon they decided to return to Italy, and, thanks to the good offices of Metternich, were permitted to take up their residence in a charming villa in the environs of Bologna. Here, in the following July, Élisa gave birth to a son, "at the moment when she had ceased to have need of an heir to her power."[1]

[1] Mlle. Avrillon, *Mémoires.*

CHAPTER XXXIII

Madame decides to join the Emperor in Elba, and embarks at Leghorn on board the British corvette *Grasshopper*—Sir Neil Campbell's impressions of *Madame*—Her arrival at Porto Ferrajo—Her house in Elba—Rosa Mellini—Visit of Pauline to Elba on her way to Naples—She decides to spend the winter in the island, where she arrives at the end of October, 1814—Atrocious calumny concerning her and Napoleon—Life in Elba—Differences between Pauline and her brother on money matters—The Emperor's books—Napoleon embarks for France—His conversation with his mother before his departure—Campbell and Pauline—*Madame* sails for Naples, but returns to France at the end of May—The Hundred Days—Second abdication of Napoleon—The last farewell at Malmaison—*Madame* again goes into exile—Pauline, landing in Tuscany, is held prisoner by the Austrians in the Château of Compignano—Her plan to escape discovered—She is eventually released and sails for Rome.

NAPOLEON had once reproached his mother with exhibiting a marked preference for whichever of her sons happened to be the victim of misfortune. Thus, she had, in turn, elevated to the first place in her affections Lucien, Louis, and Jérôme, when they happened to have incurred the weight of the Imperial displeasure. Now, however, it was Napoleon himself who stood in need of maternal consolation, and all the tenderness of Letizia's nature went out to the son who was smarting under such cruel reverses.

So soon as *Madame* learned that the Emperor

was in Elba, and that the Allies had refused to allow his wife and son to share his exile, she decided that her place was at his side, and wrote begging permission to join him. Napoleon readily consented, but, as the Barbary corsairs were just then displaying great activity off the western coast of Italy, *Madame* was advised to postpone her departure until she could secure a passage in a war-ship. On July 25, she left Rome for Leghorn, where she had been promised a passage on board an English frigate. She travelled incognito, under the name of Madame Dupont, accompanied by the Chevalier Colonna d'Istria, formerly Prefect of Naples, who had lately entered her service as chamberlain, two *dames de compagnie*, and the faithful Saveria. At Leghorn, she found that the vessel she had expected had not arrived, but, through the courtesy of Campbell, the British Commissioner who had accompanied Napoleon to his Lilliputian kingdom, it was arranged that the corvette *Grasshopper*, which had brought him to Leghorn on a political mission, should convey *Madame* and her suite to Elba.

Campbell, in his *Journal*, has left an interesting account of his first meeting with *Madame* and of their passage to Elba.

"July 30.—M. Colonna paid me a complimentary call to thank me on the part of *Madame*, and to say that a visit would be very acceptable. Promised to attend in the evening.

"July 31.—Visited *Madame*, in company with Captain Battersby of H.M.S. *Grasshopper*. She got up, with some difficulty, some seconds after our approach, and made us sit down upon chairs close to her. . . . I addressed her as '*Madame*' and '*Altesse*'; she was very pleasant and unaffected. The old lady is very handsome, of middle-size, with a good figure, and a fresh colour.

"August 2.—Embarked on his Majesty's brig *Grasshopper*, Captain Battersby, with Madame Letizia, M. Colonna, and two *dames d'honneur*, and landed at Elba the same evening.

"In leaving the inn at Leghorn to walk to the boat, M. Colonna took the arm of *Madame*, with his hat off all the way. Captain Battersby and myself took the arms of the ladies, with our hats on. Crowds followed us, and, on quitting the shore, a number of persons howled and whistled and hissed.

"Captain Battersby and two of his officers, Madame Sevira [*sic*], a passenger, and myself, all dined with *Madame* upon deck. A couch was arranged for her, from which she never stirred during the whole voyage, except once to look out for Napoleon's house, when she mounted upon the top of a gun with great activity."

During the short voyage, *Madame* appears to have been in a very confidential mood, and talked freely to Campbell about the Emperor, her other children, and even about her private affairs.

"She told me," continues the *Journal*, "that Napoleon was first intended for the Navy, and studied for it at Brienne, with a certain proportion of the other pupils. She went to see him there, and found that they all slept in hammocks, upon which she prevented him from pursuing that line and said all she could to persuade him from it: '*Mon enfant, dans la marine vous avez à combattre le feu et l'eau.*' He was then fourteen or fifteen years of age."

"She had had a great desire, she said, to visit England for many years. . . . Her son Lucien spoke very favourably of England. At first, he was treated with suspicion and laid under restrictions; which was unpleasant; but afterwards he found himself quite happy and formed very agreeable friendships.

"Louis seemed to be a great favourite of hers. His picture is on her snuff-box. She said he had written several romances, which she admired, and was sure would be generally esteemed, such as would be fit for young ladies to read. Spoke of his fortune as being small, although he did not spend money either on play or women, '*ni jeu ni femmes.*' Her eldest son she called '*le roi Joseph.*'

"She mentioned that she had been ill-treated by the Minister of the Interior in France, who wished to take her house in Paris for 600,000 francs, in the place of 800,000 francs, which she had paid for it. She only wished for what it had

cost her. She wrote him 'that she would never give up her rights and property, nor bend to the caprice of any individual. If the Minister took it by force, she would enter a protestation formally, and then take her chance of justice.'"

On casting anchor at Porto Ferrajo, one of Napoleon's *valets-de-chambre*, the harbour-master, and several other persons came on board, and informed them that the Emperor had been expecting the arrival of his mother all the preceding day, and had set off early that morning for a mountain at some little distance, on the slopes of which he appears to have contemplated building a villa. *Madame*, always exceedingly tenacious of her dignity, "seemed greatly agitated and mortified" on learning that his Majesty was absent, and that he had left no instructions for her reception; and when Colonna, at Campbell's suggestion, proposed to her to send a boat to inform Generals Bertrand and Drouot of her arrival, she "gave her consent with great violence, turning round quite pale and huffed."

At length, Bertrand and Drouot arrived, and *Madame*, accompanied by her suite, Campbell and Captain Battersby, the commander of the *Grasshopper*, landed, and was received at the wharf by the mayor of the town and all the officers of the Imperial Guard. After acknowledging their compliments, the old lady entered a carriage drawn by six horses, and, followed by another containing the British officers, proceeded to Napoleon's residence,

the Mulini, through streets lined with soldiers and crowded with curious spectators.[1]

Next morning, the Emperor returned, greeted his mother most affectionately, and took her for a long drive, to show her the principal points of interest on the island. For her residence, he allotted her a modest but comfortable house belonging to his Chamberlain Vantini, within easy distance of the Mulini, which is, or was a few years ago, the residence of the sub-prefect of Porto Ferrajo. *Madame's* sojourn is commemorated by a marble tablet in the salon, bearing the following inscription:

GIORGIO MANGANARO
DIVENUTO POSSESSORE DI QUESTA CASA
FA SAPERE AI POSTERI
CHE NEL 1814 E 15
FU ALBERGO DI LETIZIA BUONAPARTE
E CON LEI IL PIU DELLA GIORNATA QUI
STAVA NAPOLEONE.[2]

A fortnight after her arrival, on the occasion of Napoleon's birthday (August 15), *Madame* organised a splendid fête, "which excited transports of joy amid the entire population." A number of people from the mainland braved the terrors of sea-sickness and the Barbary corsairs,

[1] Sir Neil Campbell, *Journal*.

[2] "Giorgio Manganaro, having become the owner of this house, informs posterity that in 1814 and 1815 it was the residence of Letizia Buonaparte, and with her Napoleon spent the greater part of the day."

PORTO FERRAJO, ELBA, IN 1814

FROM A CONTEMPORARY PRINT

and came to assist at it, in the hope of catching a glimpse of the Emperor, though in this they were disappointed, since Napoleon, to whom such rejoicings would have recalled too many souvenirs of his former grandeur, did not grace the proceedings by his presence. Among the persons presented to *Madame* on this occasion, was a charming young girl, named Rosa Mellini, daughter of a colonel of engineers, who, on his retirement from the Army, had returned to Elba, his native island. Letizia was at once attracted to Mlle. Mellini, and, shortly afterwards, invited her to enter her service as *dame de compagnie* and secretary. The young lady consented, and remained with *Madame* for many years; and it was to her that the latter dictated her *Souvenirs.*

Pauline remained in Provence until the end of May, when she accepted an invitation from Caroline to visit her at Naples, and sailed from Fréjus on board a Neapolitan man-of-war, which her sister had sent to bring her. On the way to Naples, the ship touched at Porto Ferrajo, and Pauline landed and visited the Emperor. Campbell notes in his *Journal:*

"May 29–31.—On my return to Porto Ferrajo, I found at anchor the Neapolitan frigate *Letizia*, which had arrived the day before, with Napoleon's sister Pauline and three persons of her Household. They had been forced to put into Villafranca, near Nice, soon after their departure from

Fréjus, and had come direct from thence. After remaining for twenty-four hours at Elba, they sailed for Naples. They were at pains to state that the Neapolitan frigate had been sent by the Queen of Naples of her own accord for her sister."[1]

Pauline remained at Naples, or rather at a country-house, la Favorita, within a short distance of the city, until the end of October, when she sailed for Elba, where she had arranged to spend the winter with the Emperor and her mother. She took passage in a merchant-vessel, which, however, was escorted as far as the channel of Piombino by a Neapolitan frigate, which then returned to Naples, without communicating with Elba.[2] She landed on the last day of the month, and took up her quarters with Napoleon at the Mulini, where a suite of apartments had been prepared for her, since *Madame's* house was too small to accommodate both ladies and their respective suites.

From a letter written by the Emperor to Bertrand, on September 9th, 1814, it is evident that it was his original intention to allot the house in question to his sister, but, as *Madame* desired to have it, he was obliged to alter this arrangement: "*Madame* having taken the house which was intended for the princess, she will be lodged on

[1] Several writers incorrectly speak of Pauline as having come *from Naples*, and assert that she was the bearer of an important despatch from Murat to the Emperor.

[2] Sir Neil Campbell, *Journal*.

the first floor of my house, where she will be very comfortable."

This apparently trivial circumstance is of importance, since the fact of Pauline having resided under the same roof as her brother in Elba has been the principal peg on which anti-Bonapartist chroniclers and pamphleteers have hung the abominable charge which has been repeated by so many prejudiced or careless historians. The limits of our space, and a natural disinclination to discuss so very unsavoury a matter, prevent us from examining it here; but the reader who may wish to inform himself concerning it will find the evidence for the prosecution—such as it is—set forth by M. Marcellin Pellet (*Napoléon a l'île d'Elbe*), and for the defence by M. Arthur Lévy (*Napoléon intime*) and by M. Henri d'Almeras (*Pauline Bonaparte*). We may add that M. Turquan, whom no one can possibly accuse of undue leniency towards Pauline and her sisters, is here quite in accord with the last two writers, and stigmatises the reports in question as "odious accusations invented by the courtiers of Louis XVIII."[1]

With the advent of Pauline, Elba became quite gay. The princess inaugurated her arrival by a masked ball in the little municipal theatre at Porto Ferrajo, which the Emperor had recently caused to be constructed, at which she appeared in Maltese costume, and doubtless created a great

[1] M. J. Turquan, *les Sœurs de Napoléon.*

sensation; and this ball was followed by a number of others, some of which took place in the theatre and others at the "palace." On her side, *Madame*, who was far more at home in Elba than she had been at the ceremonious court of the Tuileries—there was no Empress here to take precedence of her—opened her salon to the military and official world of Elba, and frequently presided at the *soirées*, at which the Emperor received "*les jolies Elboïses*."

Pauline, however, seems to have found it rather difficult to accommodate her extravagant tastes to her own and her brother's changed circumstances, and this seems to have been the cause of frequent altercations between them.[1]

One day, Bertrand, who discharged the functions of Grand Master of the Palace, presented the Emperor with the following memorandum: "I have the honour to submit to your Majesty the expense incurred in putting up eight window-blinds in the salon of the Princess Borghese. The cloth has been provided by the princess. The expense amounts to seventy-two francs thirty centimes."

Napoleon wrote in the margin: "Not having ordered this expenditure, the princess will pay."

[1] Neither Napoleon nor his family had yet received a single centime of the sum which the Allies had pledged Louis XVIII to pay them. Napoleon's revenue, apart from the two million francs charged upon the French Treasury, seems to have been about half a million francs, while the maintenance of his troops alone came to twice that sum. His personal expenses, at this time, were being defrayed by his mother, who advanced him very large sums.

He also obliged her to pay a sum of 240 francs for the maintenance of her horses.[1]

How, we may well inquire, do M. Marcellin Pellet and the other historians who affect to credit the atrocious charges of the Royalist scribes reconcile these petty economies with the accustomed liberality of lovers?

The reverses which Napoleon had sustained had not in the smallest degree humbled his pride, and he still deeply resented the slightest encroachment upon his authority. While in Elba, he spent a considerable part of his day in reading, and had instructed Bertrand to order a number of books from Leghorn, all of which were to be bound alike, with an "N" on the back. Pauline, happening to visit the bookseller on one of her excursions to Leghorn, saw the books which had just arrived from the binders, and, finding the binding not at all to her taste, took upon herself to order certain alterations. When the books arrived at Porto Ferrajo, and Napoleon discovered that his instructions had not been carried out, he was exceedingly angry, and ordered the covers to be torn off and the volumes sent back to be rebound—at his sister's expense.[2]

Nevertheless, despite occasional little differences of this kind and some friction with *Madame*, who, perhaps presuming on the finan-

[1] M. Arthur Lévy, *Napoléon intime.*
[2] M. Marcellin Pellet, *Napoléon a l'île d'Elbe.*

cial assistance she was rendering the Emperor, endeavoured to persuade him to surround himself with her Corsican *protégés*, the presence of his mother and sister was undoubtedly very welcome to Napoleon. "Her [*Madame's*] devotion for me is sublime," he observed one day. "She and Pauline would reconcile me to life here for a long time, if I were in need of consolation."[1]

However, their beneficent mission was not of long duration, as, on the night of February 26, the Emperor and his little army, taking advantage of the absence of Campbell and the *Partridge*—the vessel to which the British Government had entrusted the supervision of Napoleon[2]—embarked for France, and, three days later, landed safely on the shores of the Golfe de Jouan.

Both *Madame* and Pauline appear to have been in entire ignorance of the Emperor's intentions until almost the last moment; and the former, in her *Souvenirs*, has left us an interesting account of the manner in which her son broke the momentous news to her:

"One evening, while we were at Porto Ferrajo, the Emperor seemed to be in more than usually high spirits and invited Pauline and myself to a game of écarté. Directly afterwards, he left us

[1] Baron Larrey, *Madame Mère.*

[2] The *Partridge* had gone to Leghorn to fetch Campbell, who had sailed for Tuscany on the 16th "for his health and on private affairs." If we are to believe the *Memoirs of the Time of George IV*, the "private affairs" chiefly concerned a fair lady in Florence.

and retired to his cabinet. Finding that he did not return, I went to his room to call him, when the chamberlain told me that he had gone down to the garden.

"I recollect that it was one of the warmest evenings of that spring; the moon was shining through the trees, and the Emperor, alone, was pacing, with rapid strides, up and down the alleys of the garden. Suddenly, he stopped, and, resting his head against a fig-tree, exclaimed: 'Yes, I must certainly tell my mother that.'

"On hearing these words, I approached and asked in a tone of the greatest eagerness: 'Well, what is it then, for I see that you are more than usually thoughtful this evening?'

"The Emperor raised his hand to his forehead, and, after a moment's hesitation, replied: 'Yes, I must tell you, but I forbid you to repeat what I am about to confide to you to any one whatever, not even to Pauline.' He smiled, embraced me, and resumed: 'Well, I must tell you that I am going away this very night.'

"Where are you going?"

"'To Paris; but, before leaving, I wish to have your advice.'

"'Ah! let me try to forget for one moment, that I am your mother,' I said. Then I reflected and continued: 'Heaven will not permit you to die either by poison[1] or in an activity unworthy

[1] *Madame* seems to have been in constant dread of some attempt being made by Royalist agents on the Emperor's life.

of you, but sword in hand. And now go, my son, and follow your destiny.' "[1]

Before embarking, the Emperor sent for his mother's Chamberlain, Colonna, whom he knew to be deeply attached to her. "Colonna," said he, "I am starting for France, to put my fortune to the test once more. I beg you earnestly to follow her Highness everywhere; to any place she may choose to go to. I count on you, and leave her in your care without any misgiving."

Two days after Napoleon's departure, the *Partridge*, with Campbell on board, returned to Elba. That officer was in a great state of consternation on learning of the Emperor's flight, as well he might be, seeing that his own carelessness and that of Captain Adye, the commander of the *Partridge*, had been mainly responsible for it.[2] He did not see *Madame*, but he had an interview with Pauline, who sent for him with the object of discovering if he were aware that the Emperor was making for France.[3]

[1] *Souvenirs dictés à Rome.*

[2] "Is it surprising that foreigners, who had not yet fathomed the eccentricity of British officialdom, should have believed that we connived at Napoleon's escape? It needed the bloodshed of Waterloo to wipe out this misconception."—Dr. J. Holland Rose, *Life of Napoleon I.*

[3] Either before his departure, or soon afterwards, Pauline had sent to the Emperor practically the whole of her jewellery, with the exception of the Borghese diamonds, in order that they might be converted into cash. Napoleon took the casket with him in his carriage to Belgium. After Waterloo, the carriage fell into the hands of the Allies; but what became of the jewels was never discovered. Having regard to Pauline's passion for gems, it would have been impossible for her to make a greater sacrifice.

COLONEL (AFTERWARDS GENERAL SIR) NEIL CAMPBELL

FROM A CONTEMPORARY ENGRAVING

"After being detained for a minute or more in the ante-chamber," he writes, "I sent in to say that I was under the necessity of departing immediately, as the frigate would otherwise leave without me. She then came out and made me sit down beside her, drawing her chair gradually still closer, as if she waited for me to make some private communication. She asked me, with every appearance of anxiety, if I had nothing to say to her, and what I would advise her to do; since she had already written to her husband Prince Borghese, who was now at Leghorn, and requested me to tell him that she wished to go to Rome immediately. I told her that my advice in the meantime would be to remain at Elba. She then went on to protest her ignorance of Napoleon's intended departure until the last moment; laid hold of my hand, and pressed it to her heart, that I might feel how much she was agitated. However, she did not appear to be so, and there was rather a smile upon her countenance. She inquired whether the Emperor had been taken. I told her I could not exactly say he was, but I fancied that there was every probability of it. During this conversation, she dropped a hint of her belief in his destination being for France, upon which I smiled and said: '*Oh non; ce n'est pas si loin, c'est à Naples.*' For I fancied (for the moment) she mentioned France on purpose to deceive me.

"Two or three minutes afterwards, I took my leave."

Madame remained in Elba until the end of March, when she sailed for Naples, on board the *Gioacchino*, a Neapolitan frigate, which Murat and Caroline, now reconciled to the Emperor, had placed at her disposal. At Naples, she remained until April 20, when, the Emperor having summoned her to France, she again embarked on the *Gioacchino*, in company with Fesch, who had joined her soon after her arrival in Naples, and proceeded to Gaeta, there to await the arrival of a French frigate, the *Melpomène*, which Napoleon was sending from Toulon to fetch them. The *Melpomène*, however, did not make her appearance, and it was not until the beginning of May that they learned that, on entering the Bay of Naples, she had been attacked and captured by two British cruisers. Fortunately, another French frigate, the *Dryade*, after narrowly escaping a like fate, had taken refuge in the harbour, and when her captain at length summoned up courage to venture forth, *Madame* and the cardinal sailed with him, and, on May 23, landed near Antibes, not far from the spot where Napoleon had disembarked ten weeks before. After spending the night at Antibes, they travelled to Lyons, where, on their arrival, all the bells in the city rang out a joyous peal. Here they remained until the 29th, when they continued their journey, and, on June 1, arrived safely in Paris.

Thiers and several other historians state that

Madame assisted at the Champ de Mai, but this is incorrect, as she did not reach Paris until some hours after the festival was over.[1] However, she attended the opening of the Chambers, six days later, and a lady who was present has left us an interesting description of her appearance on this occasion :

" Towards four o'clock, at the sound of the opening of a door, all eyes were turned towards a tribune prepared for *Madame Mère* and Queen Hortense, who were arriving, followed by their ladies-in-waiting.

" The Emperor's mother must have been one of the most beautiful women who ever lived. She was, at this time, about sixty-five years of age, and impressed people still by the regularity of her features and the air of distinction which her whole person diffused. I recollect that she wore a gown of billowy lace, with long sleeves lined with orange satin, and for head-dress a toque decorated with white feathers and embellished, like her corsage, with superb diamonds. Her beautiful black eyes, shaded by long lashes, and surmounted by delicate arched eyebrows, might have challenged comparison with those of many young women in brightness and expression."

And the writer adds : " The blonde hair of Queen Hortense, the delicacy of her complexion and her features, the whiteness of her skin, the grace of her movements, contrasted with the

[1] Baron Larrey, *Madame Mère.*

classic gravity which was the dominating characteristic of her mother-in-law's countenance."[1]

On April 17, the Emperor had removed from the lonely splendour of the Tuileries to the Elysée, and here, at his request, his mother took up her quarters. Apart from her anxiety as to the issue of the approaching war, she was probably happier than she had been for many years, as, with the exception of Louis, all her sons were about her again, Lucien having been at length reconciled to Napoleon and nominated one of the Council which was to exercise the government during the Emperor's absence.

At dawn on June 12, Napoleon bade farewell to his relatives and left his slumbering capital to play his last stake. Nine days later found him back at the Elysée a beaten man, and France prostrate at the feet of the Allies. Lucien urged him to dissolve the hostile Chambers and endeavour to raise the country against the Coalition. "Dare!" he exclaimed. But Napoleon replied that he had dared only too much already, and, on the 22nd, he abdicated for the second time. Ordered by the Provisional Government to quit Paris, he withdrew, on the 25th, to Malmaison, followed by *Madame*, Hortense, and a few faithful friends; and, on the 29th, he set out for Rochefort, with the intention of sailing for the

[1] Mlle. Cochelet (Madame Parquin), *Mémoires sur la Reine Hortense et la famille impériale.*

United States, whither *Madame*, Lucien, and Jérôme had promised to follow him, so soon as they could make the necessary arrangements.

When the time for his departure from Malmaison arrived, his friends withdrew and left him alone with his mother. At that moment, there came a knock at the door, and a National Guard, in uniform, presented himself and begged to be allowed to take leave of the Emperor. He was the celebrated actor Talma, of whose talents Napoleon had always been a great admirer, and who had received from him much kindness. The Emperor ordered him to be admitted, spoke to him for a few moments, and bade him an affectionate farewell. As Talma was leaving, he was witness of the parting between Napoleon and his mother, which, the following day, he described to Mlle. Cochelet, Queen Hortense's *lectrice* and confidante:

"Of how beautiful a tragic scene was I the witness! What a spectacle was the separation between *Madame Mère* and her son! The Emperor exhibited no sign of weakness, but what an expression came over his countenance, what thoughts must have coursed through his mind! *Madame's* emotion revealed itself in two great tears, which furrowed those beautiful classic features; and her lips pronounced but three words, as she held his hand, when the moment for departure came: 'Farewell, my son!' The

Emperor's response was equally brief: 'Mother, farewell!' Then they embraced."[1]

Thus was accomplished the parting which was to prove a final one—a touching scene, worthy, as Baron Larrey remarks, to be immortalised by the brush of some famous painter.

The Bourbons returned to the Tuileries, and the Bonapartes departed once more into exile. Under the weight of sorrow, *Madame's* health had quite broken down, and it was not until July 19th that she was well enough to travel, when she started for Italy, accompanied by Fesch and an Austrian officer, whom Metternich had sent to escort her. The reception they met with as they travelled through France was somewhat mixed, but, on the whole, sympathy seems to have predominated, and, on leaving Bourg-en-Bresse, where they rested for a few hours, they were followed by cries of "*Vive l'Empereur! Vive Madame Mère!*" From Bologna, the cardinal wrote to Ferdinand III of Tuscany, asking permission for his sister and himself to take up their residence in Sienna; but the request was refused, and, after remaining a few days in Sienna, they continued their journey to Rome, which was reached on the morning of August 15, a week after Napoleon had set sail for St. Helena on the *Northumberland.*

Pauline had left Elba on March 1—the same

[1] Mlle. Cochelet (Madame Parquin), *Mémoires sur la Reine Hortense et la famille impériale.*

day on which Napoleon had landed on the shores of Provence—with the intention of making for France. But the weather was stormy, and she suffered so terribly from sea-sickness, that she begged the captain to run for the Italian coast. He complied, and put into a little creek near Castagneto, in which stood one of those towers which the Medici had erected as a protection against the Barbary pirates, where she remained some hours, and was imprudent enough to inform her hosts that the Emperor had quitted Elba. In the evening, the wind having fallen, she re-embarked, and, on the night of March 3, landed at Viareggio, and proceeded to the Château of Compignano, a charmingly-situated country-house, which Élisa had purchased in 1812, and which now belonged to Andreozzo Mansi, her *procureur*.

In the meantime, however, the Mayor of Castagneto had despatched a courier to inform the Florentine authorities of the arrival of the princess and of the extraordinary news of which she was the bearer. The Government seems to have been under the impression that the lady had come for the purpose of inciting a revolt; Werklein, the Austrian Governor of Lucca, sent a detachment of troops to establish a blockade of the Château of Compignano, and Pauline found herself a prisoner of State.

"Madame Pauline," wrote the chief of the police at Lucca to the Governor of Pisa, "is

always under an Austrian guard, which has the most strict orders to watch her. She is, in consequence, forbidden to have any correspondence, or even to speak, with any one without the consent and orders of the Governor, and always in the presence of the guard. Her service only consists of seven women: the two men whom she had brought from the Isle of Elba have been sent to France under a strong escort. She leads a regular life, and does not display any luxury. The state of her health is very bad; and she is obliged to keep her room and even her bed."[1]

In vain Pauline protested that her presence in Italy had no concern whatever with politics, and begged Werklein to authorise her departure for Bagni di Lucca, the waters of which the physicians who, always with the most extreme precautions, were permitted to attend her, had recommended; but that functionary remained inflexible. He no doubt acted wisely, as the whole of Central Italy was seething with excitement, on account of the reappearance on the scene of Murat, who was preparing to march on the Po; and the presence of a sister of the Emperor in the neighbourhood of Lucca would have certainly tended to stimulate the anti-Austrian movement.

In despair, Pauline began to cast about her for some means of escape. An Italian waiting-woman of the princess, named Maria Orsini, on the pretext of having quitted her Highness's

[1] Published by M. E. Rodocanachi, *Élisa Napoléon en Italie*.

service, made her way to Florence, where she arranged with a certain Polidori, a Corsican, to hire a ship, which was to cruise off the coast until Pauline, who intended to elude her jailers, by assuming male attire, could find an opportunity of embarking. Polidori procured a Genoese ship, lying at Leghorn, the captain of which received 3,000 ducats for the use of his vessel; but his conduct was so suspicious that the police kept him under observation, and quickly discovered the plot. "I have been informed," writes the Governor of Leghorn, "that this vessel was intended to take on board *the* Pauline, who, disguised as a man, would have eluded the vigilance of her guard. Warned, through my foresight, they kept a careful watch, and she was compelled to renounce her project."[1]

Murat was defeated at Tolentino and compelled to fly from his kingdom; Napoleon played and lost his last stake at Waterloo, and was banished to St. Helena; but still Pauline remained in semi-captivity at the Château of Compignano.[2] At length, at the beginning of October, orders arrived from Vienna that she should be

[1] In the same letter, the Governor advises that the Borghese diamonds, which, he says, he has reason to believe are in the princess's possession, should be seized, lest she should find means to send them to the Emperor.

[2] M. Turquan, who is evidently unaware of the facts which we have just related, states that Pauline was in Paris during the Hundred Days, and accompanied Napoleon on his visit to Malmaison, three days before he started for Belgium. Baron Larrey, Madame Tschudi, and several other writers have fallen into the same error.

allowed to depart, on condition that she immediately proceeded to Rome, by sea. On the 11th, she left the château, and, on the following day, embarked, at Viareggio, on a gun-ketch, the *Padre e Figlio.* In the evening, as the weather was stormy and the princess, in consequence, very ill, they cast anchor in the harbour of Piombino, and permission was obtained from the authorities for her to spend the night on shore, where she accepted the hospitality of a French resident. On the morrow, she was escorted to the harbour by all the principal inhabitants of the little town, who cheered her loudly, from which it would appear that the Piombinese regretted the beneficent, if autocratic, rule of the exiled Élisa. A few days later, Pauline arrived at Civita Vecchia, whence she proceeded to Rome,[1]

[1] M. Rodocanachi, *Élisa Napoléon en Italie.*

CHAPTER XXXIV

Position of Murat and Caroline after the fall of the Empire—Intrigues of Louise Philippe to secure the restoration of Ferdinand IV to Naples—Demands of Talleyrand at the Congress of Vienna—Attitude of Metternich—Murat, fearful of losing his throne, recommences his intrigues in Italy, and makes overtures to Napoleon—On the return of the Emperor from Elba, without waiting for his instructions, he declares war on Austria—Explanation of his conduct—Responsibility of Caroline considered—Murat is defeated at Tolentino, returns to Naples, and escapes to France—Caroline compelled to take refuge with the British fleet—She is conveyed to Trieste on board H.M.S. *Tremendous*—Murat offers his services to the Emperor, who declines them—After the second abdication of Napoleon, he takes refuge in Corsica—And resolves to attempt the reconquest of his kingdom—Having decided to refuse the offer of an asylum in Austria, he sets sail for Calabria—His fate.

THE treachery of Murat and Caroline to their benefactor had preserved for them their throne; Naples alone survived the general wreck of the Bonaparte kingdoms; but it was not for long.

Austria, as we have seen, under the stress of military exigencies, had guaranteed Murat his dominions and a considerable accession of territory, and had undertaken to obtain Great Britain's guarantee and a formal renunciation on the part of the King of Sicily of all claims on Naples. But, owing to Bentinck's persistent disregard of the orders of his Government, Great Britain's

signature, which would have given the treaty of January 11, 1814 real and durable value, had not been obtained; and this omission left a loophole for intrigue of which Ferdinand and his partisans were not slow to take advantage.

Scarcely had Napoleon retired to Elba than Louis Philippe, Duc d'Orléans, who had married Maria Amelia, eldest daughter of Ferdinand, hastened to Paris to enter a formal protest, in the name of his father-in-law, against the treaty which Austria had made with Murat, and to demand the restoration to Ferdinand of the dominions of which he had been deprived in 1806. He met, however, with a very cold reception. The Emperor of Austria was naturally indignant that any one should imagine him capable of going back upon his plighted word; while both he and Alexander regarded such potentates as his Sicilian Majesty as a disgrace to the cause of Monarchy and Legitimacy. Louis XVIII, when appealed to, was sympathetic, but not very encouraging. He promised to instruct Talleyrand to plead the cause of his kinsman at the approaching Congress of Vienna with all the skill and eloquence at his command, and declared that he himself would never recognise Murat. But further than that he would not go: a recourse to arms on behalf of Ferdinand, he declared, was out of the question.

From Paris, Louis Philippe went to London. He had an audience of the Regent and he interviewed Liverpool and Castlereagh; but he got

no comfort from them. The British Government, he was told, although it had not actually signed the treaty of January 11, had signified its approval of it, and therefore considered itself morally bound; and he quitted England, convinced that all his efforts on behalf of his father-in-law would prove fruitless.

Such would undoubtedly have been the case, if Murat had been content to sit still under his treaty obligations and to call upon the Powers to fulfil theirs; but a policy of masterly inactivity was ill suited to his fiery and impetuous nature. When the Congress of Vienna met, and Talleyrand, in accordance with his instructions, began to urge the restoration of Ferdinand to Naples, Metternich, although admitting that he was in sympathy with him, firmly refused to advise his master to repudiate the treaty with Murat. It had been made, he said, in an hour of stress, when they had need of Murat's services, and he would be no party to breaking it.[1] "But," he

[1] Talleyrand, however, appears to have believed that Metternich was actuated, not so much by political considerations as by his affection for Caroline. "He (Metternich) met a woman of his acquaintance," he writes from Vienna, on November 25, 1814, "and told her that he was being tormented about this affair of Naples, but that he could not see his way to consent to it; that he loved the Queen passionately, and was in constant communication with her." Louis XVIII was of the same opinion. "They talk of engagements," said he, "but that is not what stands in the way of justice. It is another reason, and the most shameful of which history makes mention; for if Antony shamefully abandoned his fleet and his army, at least it was himself and not his Minister whom Cleopatra had subjugated."

added, "you know Murat's temper. Sooner or later, he will make a slip, by which we shall profit."

And this was precisely what happened. The failure of Austria to obtain Ferdinand's renunciation of his claims on Naples; the persistent intrigues of that potentate and his son-in-law, and the refusal of the Bourbon kings of France and Spain to recognise his sovereignty,[1] had caused Murat great irritation and uneasiness; and when his representatives, Gallo and Campochiaro, were refused admittance to the Congress of Vienna, he became seriously alarmed. There were, as a matter of fact, no real grounds for his apprehensions, for his enemies at the Congress could effect nothing, in the face of the resolute attitude of Austria, so long as he gave them no opening. But he saw himself isolated in Italy, which, with the exception of his own kingdom, had now practically reverted to its former rulers; he knew that they, one and all, ardently desired his deposition; he was aware that he had disgusted Austria by his double-dealing during the previous year, and his half-hearted co-operation in the Italian campaign of 1814; and when Metternich suggested that, in view of the hostility of

[1] In accordance with the instructions of Louis XVIII, the following entry was inserted in the official Gazetteer of France:

"Naples, see Sicily, Kingdom of."

To which the official Gazetteer of Naples replied:

"France, see Elba, Island of."

which he seemed to be the object, it would be as well if he could bring himself to accept the Ionian Islands in exchange for Naples, he was convinced that the Cabinet of Vienna was only waiting for some pretext to repudiate its obligations and sacrifice him to his enemies.

On the other hand, he beheld France growing every day more restive beneath the rule of its foolish old king and his tactless advisers; Italy, which had speedily awakened to the fact that she had exchanged the whips of Napoleon for the scorpions of Austria and of the despots whom the latter upheld, seething with discontent from the Alps to his own frontiers; the Allies squabbling over the Polish Question and rattling their swords in their scabbards, and the Eagle in Elba poising for his swoop upon a distracted Europe.

Exasperated by the thought that the reward of his treason might yet be snatched from him, Murat returned to his former dreams of ruling over a united and independent Italy, inundated the country with his secret agents, and opened negotiations with the prisoner of Elba. His overtures were favourably received. Napoleon pardoned him and restored to him a measure of his confidence, and, shortly before the Emperor embarked for France, Murat began mobilising his troops and making active preparations for war.

When he received the news of Napoleon's

landing in Provence, he at first seemed disposed to wait upon events, and despatched a courier to England, with an assurance that, whatever might happen, his policy towards the British Government would remain unchanged. But, so soon as he learned of the Emperor's triumphant progress towards Paris and of the ignominious flight of the Bourbons, he hastened to send his aide-de-camp Bauffremont to France to ask for instructions.

The Emperor replied that Murat must continue his preparations for war, but on no account commence hostilities without giving him due warning of his intention. His object, of course, was to use his brother-in-law as a lever to detach Austria from the Coalition, since he was of opinion that the fear of a national rising in Italy with the King of Naples at its head would be sufficient to induce the Court of Vienna to remain neutral, even if other arguments failed. Great, therefore, was his consternation when he learned, a few days later, that Murat, without waiting for the return of Bauffremont, had declared war on Austria.

Murat's conduct, though rash to the point of folly, is not difficult to understand. He and the Emperor were at cross-purposes. Napoleon, as we have said, intended to use Murat to detach Austria from the Coalition, and, in the event of the failure of his negotiations with that Power, to reinforce the Neapolitan army by a French corps,

CAROLINE BONAPARTE, QUEEN OF NAPLES

FROM AN ENGRAVING AFTER THE DRAWING BY FLAMENG. (BRITISH MUSEUM)

and employ it to create a diversion in Italy, which, he judged, would prevent Austria from undertaking any effective operations against France. Murat desired to take advantage of the consternation caused by the Emperor's reappearance on the scene to realise his own ambitious dreams, and, in the persuasion that his declaration of war upon Austria would be followed by a general rising of the Italian patriots, believed himself capable of conquering the peninsula without any assistance from France, and of thus establishing a claim to the throne of Italy which Napoleon, if victorious, would be unable to dispute.

It has been repeatedly asserted that a large measure of responsibility for this fatal step rests with Caroline, and that, but for the influence of his wife, Murat would never have declared war. But the tendency among a certain school of chroniclers and historians has always been to exaggerate to an absurd degree the Queen's influence over her husband, and to make her the scapegoat for all Murat's delinquencies. Caroline's whole career up to this time shows that with her ambition was invariably tempered by prudence, and that in the game of politics she had discouraged her husband's desire to play for high stakes and counselled him to be content with moderate gains. That she should suddenly have abandoned these cautious methods is difficult to believe, and we observe that Murat's latest biographers, MM. Chavanon and Saint-

Yves, who have made an exhaustive study of the most trustworthy contemporary authorities, both French and Italian, are of opinion that Murat acted entirely on his own initiative.[1]

On March 17, the King, having again confided the Regency to Caroline, left Naples and, a few days later, entered the Papal States at the head of an army of 40,000 men, and issued a proclamation calling upon Italy to rise on behalf of her independence and unity. Italy, however, declined to throw herself into the arms of so doubtful a saviour, for the chiefs of the patriotic party had not forgotten that Murat had tricked them in 1814; and the raw Neapolitan troops found themselves obliged to contend, unaided, against the seasoned veterans of Austria. Nevertheless,

[1] M. Turquan, without appreciating its significance, since he is among those who attribute Murat's action to the influence of the Queen, publishes a letter of Caroline to Madame Récamier, written only a few days before Murat declared war. After inviting Madame Récamier and Madame de Stäel, who, having both been exiled by Napoleon, were naturally in considerable trepidation at his return, to take refuge at Naples, she continues: "*We are very tranquil here.* The condition of France and all other countries to which the former sovereigns have returned, has had a beneficial effect. Our people love us, and love us sincerely. They fear more than ever anything which may tend to bring back Ferdinand. . . . Everything inclines us to anticipate a *tranquil future.* I am the more happy, since it affords me the certainty of being able to offer you a safe harbour against the storms of life. I shall be charmed to do anything to prove, both to you and your friends, the extent and strength of my affection."

Would Caroline, who could have had no object whatever in deceiving Madame Récamier, have written in this strain, if she had been doing her utmost to induce her husband to plunge Naples into war?

if Murat had possessed anything of the military genius of Napoleon, he might have profited by the separation of the Austrian forces to have crushed them by sheer weight of numbers before they had time to concentrate. But he allowed the opportunity to slip, and, after gaining one or two trifling successes, was utterly routed by Neipperg at Tolentino (May 3).

Having authorised his generals, Carascosa and Coletta, to conclude a capitulation with the Austrians, Murat returned in all haste to Naples, which he reached on the evening of May 18, to find an English squadron in the Bay, and that, under threat of a bombardment, Caroline had already been compelled to surrender to it the little Neapolitan fleet.

On the morrow, he learned that the Austrians had refused to sign any convention with the vanquished army, unless "Marshal Murat" were expressly excluded from its provisions; and, desirous of preventing useless bloodshed, he gave orders to his generals to accept this condition, and announced his intention of throwing himself into the fortress of Gaeta, to which the Queen had sent the royal children on learning of the disaster of Tolentino, and holding out to the last extremity. His friends, however, dissuaded him, pointing out that, now that he had lost his throne, his wisest course was to escape to France and offer his sword to the Emperor; and upon this he eventually decided.

Accordingly, when night fell, he bade farewell to his wife and, accompanied by a few faithful followers, left Naples, in disguise, and gained the Isle of Ischia, where, the following morning, he embarked on a Maltese vessel, the *Santa Caterina*, which, by the rather simple device of hoisting the English flag, succeeded in escaping the attentions of the British cruisers, and, on the 25th, landed him at Cannes.

While the *Santa Caterina* was conveying Murat and his followers to France, Caroline, who, in this emergency, had displayed her usual courage and presence of mind, found herself confronted by a new danger. On the night of May 21–22, the rabble of Naples rose in insurrection, and the Queen was obliged to send off a boat to the British squadron in the Bay to implore its commander, Commodore Campbell, to land troops to defend the palace, and subsequently to take refuge on his ship, the *Tremendous*.

From the deck of the British man-of-war, which remained several days before Naples, Caroline could perceive every evening the illuminations and hear the salvoes of artillery by which the people who had so lately acclaimed her were celebrating the restoration of Ferdinand. Nor was this her only humiliation, since it seems to have been a favourite pastime with a certain section of her late subjects to put off to the *Tremendous* in boats, "to hoot the prisoner

and to deafen her with insulting and obscene songs."[1]

Notwithstanding the instructions of Murat, Carascosa and Coletta had neglected to make any stipulation for the Queen and her children in the convention which they had concluded with the Austrians. Caroline, when informed of this omission, requested Campbell to convey her and her children to some port in Provence, whence she intended to join her husband; which that officer promised to do, subject to the consent of Lord Exmouth, the commander of the British Mediterranean Fleet. Exmouth, however, declined to authorise her liberation, whereupon Caroline appealed to Neipperg, who had just entered Naples with the advance-guard of the Austrian army, and placed herself under his protection. Neipperg, after some hesitation, decided that she should be conveyed to Trieste, there to await Francis II's decision in regard to her; and the Queen's children having been brought from Gaeta, they set sail for that port, where they arrived on June 8.

It is related that, on nearing Messina, the *Tremendous* met the vessel which was bringing back Ferdinand of Sicily to Naples. Before giving orders for the customary salute to be fired, Campbell went to the Queen to beg her not to be alarmed at the report of the guns she would presently hear, as they were merely

[1] Marquis de Sassenay, *les Derniers Mois de Murat.*

saluting the King of the Two Sicilies. "Monsieur," replied Caroline, haughtily; "the sound of cannon is neither a new nor an unpleasant one to the ear of a Bonaparte."

On his arrival at Cannes, Murat offered his services to Napoleon, through the medium of his friend Fouché, since he did not dare to address himself directly to his brother-in-law. But the Emperor, who had been greatly incensed by the inopportune and disastrous campaign which had foiled his hopes of detaching Austria from the Coalition,[1] declined them. Fouché, however, wrote, advising Murat to wait patiently in Provence, as he believed that the Emperor would eventually offer him employment; and Maréchal Brune, who visited him, on his way with his division to the Italian frontier, appears to have given him the same counsel.

The ex-King accordingly remained at Cannes, where he was in daily anticipation of being joined by his wife and children; and he was bitterly disappointed when he learned, from the captain of a merchant-vessel trading between Provence and Naples, that they had sailed for Trieste on board the *Tremendous*. He appears to have been under the impression that Caroline had deliberately preferred the protection of her husband's enemies to sharing his fortunes, and is said to have burst

[1] Dr. Holland Rose (*Life of Napoleon I*) is of opinion that Murat's conduct really made no difference, the Allies having already resolved to unite their forces to crush Napoleon.

into tears, exclaiming that he had lost, at one and the same time, kingdom, property, wife, and children.

After the second abdication of Napoleon, Murat despatched his aide-de-camp Macirone[1] to Paris, to demand the protection of the Allies. But the White Terror was raging in the South, and he found that, not only his liberty, but his life, was in danger. Accordingly, without waiting for the return of Macirone, he embarked with four friends on a small coasting-vessel and sailed for Corsica, where he would be certain to find sympathisers and protectors. The weather was stormy, and the little craft was on the point of foundering, when the mail-boat plying between Bastia and Toulon appeared and rescued them from their perilous situation.

On August 25, they landed at Bastia, where the authorities, having learned of their arrival, caused three of the party to be arrested. Murat, however, succeeded in effecting his escape to Vescovato, where a former officer in the Neapolitan army, named Dominique Franceschetti, resided, and took refuge in the house of the mayor, whose daughter Franceschetti had married. The Governor of Corsica sent gendarmes to arrest him, but the townsfolk rushed to arms, surrounded the *mairie*, and threatened to fire upon the gen-

[1] He was the son of a Roman gentleman of good family, who had married an Englishwoman, and he had been born and educated in England. He has left an interesting, though not very trustworthy, account of Murat's last adventures.

darmes, if they attempted to lay hands upon the fugitive.

Murat, no doubt inspired by the example of Napoleon, now conceived the daring project of attempting the reconquest of his kingdom, and entered into communication with his adherents in Naples. The information he received led him to believe that the country was ripe for insurrection, and that the expedition he contemplated would almost certainly be attended with success; and he at once began recruiting soldiers.[1] Towards the end of September, Macirone arrived in Corsica, authorised by Francis II of Austria to offer his

[1] It has been the subject of much controversy whether the persons who furnished Murat with the misleading information which encouraged him to undertake this foolhardy enterprise were merely genuine adherents inspired by a fatal optimism, or *agents-provocateurs* employed by the Neapolitan Government to lure the ex-King to his doom. The latter view is that taken by the Marquis de Sassenay, in his very able work, *les Derniers Mois de Murat* (Paris, 1896). M. de Sassenay bases his conclusions chiefly upon the despatches of Baron Köller, Quartermaster-General of the Austrian Army of Occupation in Naples, to the Minister of War at Vienna, in which he declares that Murat was lured to Calabria by a deeply-laid plot engineered by Luigi de' Medici, Minister of Police at Naples, and that Barbara, the captain of the vessel on which the ex-King sailed, was in Medici's pay, and had been charged to do everything possible to persuade him to land at Pizzo, whither, in anticipation of his arrival, agents had been sent to stir up the people against him. MM. Chavanon and Saint-Yves, however, traverse these statements, and, among other objections, point out that Pizzo was not the point at which Murat had intended to disembark, but San Lucido, some distance to the northward, and that he landed at Pizzo because, as we shall presently show, the events of the voyage had obliged him to do so. Nevertheless, there can be no question that Köller's conviction that the Neapolitan Government had laid an ambush for Ferdinand's rival was shared by many of his contemporaries, even by some who had little sympathy with Murat.

master an asylum in his dominions, provided that he would renounce all claim to the throne of Naples, consent to live as a private individual, with the title of Conte di Lipona—his wife having taken the title of Contessa di Lipona (an anagram of Napoli)—and give his parole not to quit Austrian territory without the express consent of the Emperor.

All things considered, it was a generous offer, but it came too late, as Murat had already completed his preparations, and, in spite of the entreaties of Macirone and Franceschetti, on the night of September 28–29, he left Ajaccio, with six ships and some two hundred and fifty adventurous spirits, who, by lavish promises, he had induced to share his fortunes, and set sail for Calabria.

It appears to have been his intention to land at San Lucido, in Northern Calabria, where the population were known to be favourable to his cause; but his flotilla was scattered by a storm, and, on the morning of October 8, he found himself with but two ships off the little town of Pizzo. His officers represented the futility of attempting to carry out his project with a mere handful of men, and advised him to abandon it, make for Trieste, and avail himself of the protection offered by Austria. He reluctantly consented, but his ship had been damaged by the storm, and provisions and water were running short; and the captain, a Maltese named Barbara, represented that, under the circumstances, it would be impossible to reach Trieste and advised them to

land at Pizzo, where they might procure another vessel, or, at any rate, repair their own and obtain provisions.

Suddenly, the idea of disembarking, not in the character of an unknown traveller, but as King, occurred to Murat, and though his companions protested, as well they might, against an act of such criminal folly, they eventually agreed to his proposal.

Accordingly, dressed in full uniform and wearing a three-cornered hat, with a cockade clasped by a magnificent diamond buckle, the ex-King stepped on shore, followed by twenty-six men.[1] They made their way to the Piazza, which was crowded, since it was Sunday and a market-day, where Murat's followers began to shout: "Long live our King Joachim!" The people, however, made no movement to join them and regarded the party with mingled astonishment and anger. On Murat's accession to the throne of Naples, that part of Calabria had been a stronghold of brigandage, and the peasantry hated the ex-King, for the ruthless measures which had been employed to stamp out what the most of them looked upon as a legitimate industry.

Observing their hostile attitude, Murat and his followers quitted the town and took the road to

[1] Such is the number given by MM. Chavanon and Saint-Yves, but the Neapolitan Minister of Police, in a despatch of October 10, puts the number at "between fifteen and twenty." A'Court, the British Minister at Naples, in a despatch of the 15th, speaks of "sixteen persons."

Monteleone, five or six miles distant, where one of his old regiments was stationed. But a captain of gendarmerie, named Trentacapilli, now arrived upon the scene, at whose instigation the people took up arms, set off in pursuit, and made the whole party prisoners.[1]

Amid the blows and execrations of his captors, the hapless Murat was dragged away to the common gaol. A woman struck him in the face, crying out: "You talk of liberty [referring to a proclamation recently issued], and you caused my three sons to be shot!"[2] and, but for the efforts of Trentacapilli and Alcalà—the steward of a Spanish nobleman, the Duke of Infantado, owner of the Castle of Pizzo—he would, in all probability, have been torn to pieces by the infuriated people.

On the arrival of General Nunziante,[3] the military governor of Calabria, Murat was removed to the castle, where he appears to have been treated with every consideration. But Ferdinand and his Ministers had at once resolved on his death, and, on the 13th, a military commission, presided over by Nunziante, met at Pizzo, with

[1] "A slight resistance was offered, in which one person of Murat's suite was killed and a few others wounded."—A' Court to Castlereagh, October 15, 1815.

[2] They were doubtless brigands, who had been executed by the orders of Manhès, Governor of Calabria under Murat.

[3] M. Turquan cannot resist the temptation of converting the name of this officer into Annunziata—the name by which Murat's wife was baptised—making him preside over the execution as well as over the trial of Murat, and moralising to the extent of half a page upon this striking coincidence!

instructions "to judge him as a public enemy and, having passed sentence, to proceed to execution after allowing an interval of a quarter of an hour, for religious preparation."[1]

Murat, who had refused to plead, was condemned to death, and, after addressing a touching letter of farewell to his wife and children,[2] and receiving absolution, was shot that same afternoon on the esplanade at Pizzo. He died with that calm courage which might have been expected from one of the bravest men that ever drew a sword. "Soldiers," were his last words, "aim at my heart, but spare my face." Notwithstanding which request, one of his executioners deliberately fired at his face, the ball passing through the right cheek. His remains were interred in the cemetery at Pizzo.[3]

[1] Letter of Medici to Nunziante, October 10, 1815, published by the Marquis de Sassenay.

[2] "My dear Caroline, my last hour has come; in a few moments, I shall have ceased to live; in a few moments, you will no longer have a husband. Never forget me; my life was not stained by any act of injustice. Farewell, my Achille; farewell, my Letizia; farewell, my Lucien; farewell, my Louise; show the world that you are worthy of me. I leave you without a kingdom and without means, in the midst of my numerous enemies. Show yourself superior to misfortune; think of what you are and of what you have been. God will bless you. Do not curse my memory. I declare that my greatest grief in the last moments of my life is to die far away from my children.—Pizzo, October 13."

[3] There is no foundation for the sensational story related by Guglielmo Pepe, in his *Memorie*, and reproduced by Alexandre Dumas, in his *Crimes célèbres*, that after Murat's death his head was severed from his body and carried to Naples, where Ferdinand caused it to be preserved in spirits of wine, in order that if any adventurer claiming to be Murat should appear, he might be able to confute him.

CHAPTER XXXV

Italy, after the second abdication of Napoleon, becomes the refuge of the Bonapartes—*Madame Mère* in Rome—She offers her whole fortune to Napoleon, who, however, declines to avail himself of her generosity—Her letter to the Allied Sovereigns —She is suspected by the French Government of endeavouring to foment disturbances in Corsica—Her retired life—Her generosity to her children—She refuses to discontinue the use of the Imperial Arms—Her hatred of Marie Louise—Her anguish on learning of the Emperor's death—Antommarchi's interviews with her on his return from St. Helena—Élisa at Bologna—After the return of the Emperor from Elba, the Austrian Government declines to permit her to remain in Italy —She settles at Trieste—Her last years—Her death—Her children—Monument erected by Baciocchi—Pauline in Rome —Her popularity in society—Her devotion to the Emperor— She writes to the Earl of Liverpool to demand the removal of Napoleon from St. Helena—She becomes very ill—She is reconciled to her husband—Her death.

ITALY, after Napoleon's second abdication, became the refuge of the Bonapartes. It was but natural that it should, since it was the cradle of their race, its language was theirs, and they regarded it as a second country. With the exception of Joseph, who emigrated to the United States, and Élisa, who passed the few remaining years of her life at Trieste, all the members of the Imperial Family found their way there, sooner or later. *Madame Mère*, Pauline,

and Fesch settled in Rome, where, in 1823, they were joined by Jérôme, and, shortly afterwards, by the Duchesse de Saint-Leu (Queen Hortense) and her two sons. Lucien, whom Pius VII had created Principe di Canino, divided his time between the estate from which he took his title and the Villa Ruffinella, near Frascati. In 1825, Louis, after spending some years in Rome, went to live in Florence; while, in 1831, Caroline, after sixteen years' residence on Austrian soil, at length obtained permission to make her home in the Tuscan capital.

On arriving in Rome, *Madame Mère*—as Letizia continued to be called—went to live with her brother at the Palazzo Falconieri, Via Julia, where she occupied the first floor, the cardinal occupying the second. Early in the year 1818, however, when the Bourbons were shamed into paying her the 800,000 francs which she had demanded in 1814 for the Hôtel de Brienne,[1] she purchased a house of her own, the Palazzo Rinucci, in the Via Condotti,[2] and finally, in 1824, established herself at the Palazzo Rusticucci dell' Asti, at the corner of the Corso and the Piazza di Venezia, henceforth to be known as the Palazzo Bonaparte.[3]

[1] See p. 306, *supra*.

[2] For which Fesch, in a letter of April 3, 1818, says that she paid 27,000 piastres.

[3] "We all know the lofty structure at the end of the Corso and opposite the new Via Nazionale and the Piazza di Venezia, into which the high-pitched windows of the southern front look.

At the time of *Madame's* arrival in Rome, she was still hopeful that Napoleon had succeeded in effecting his escape to America, and it was a terrible blow to her when she learned that he had surrendered to the English and was on his way to St. Helena. "I am indeed a Mater Dolorosa," she writes to Cardinal Consalvi; "the sole comfort that remains to me is that the Holy Father is willing to forget the past and to remember only his unfailing kindness towards my family."

When Las Cases returned to Europe and she learned of the Emperor's financial embarassments, she offered to place all she possessed at his disposal; but Napoleon refused to avail himself of his mother's generosity, though he appears to have accepted from her a loan of 100,000 francs. She petitioned several times for permission to be allowed to share his exile, but the British Government did not see its way to accede to her request, and, even if it had, it seems improbable that Napoleon would have consented to her undertaking the voyage.

The exaggerated account of Napoleon's failing health given by the surgeon O'Meara, on his

Immediately in front, a vast mediæval pile frowns down a look of sulky contempt on its machicolated towers, at the degeneration of the modern city. This, now the Austrian Embassy *auprès du Pape*, with its huge inner court and fragrant orange-grove, figures often in olden times as the scene of many a bloody skirmish between those everlasting fighters, the Colonna and the Orsini."—Mrs. Elliot, *Roman Gossip.*

return from St. Helena, in the summer of 1818,[1] caused *Madame* the keenest anguish, and in the autumn we find her addressing the following letter to each of the Allied Sovereigns, who had met together at the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle.

Rome, August 29, 1818

A mother afflicted beyond anything which words can express has long cherished the hope that the reunion of your Imperial and Royal Majesties would restore her to happiness.

It is impossible that the continued captivity of the Emperor Napoleon should not be brought under discussion, and your magnanimity, your power, and the recollection of former circumstances will undoubtedly induce your Majesties to interest yourselves in the deliverance of a person who occupied so important a place in your consideration, and even in your friendship.

Can you permit to perish in cruel banishment a sovereign, who, trusting to the magnanimity of his enemy, threw himself into his arms. My son might have demanded an asylum with the Emperor, his father-in-law; he might have placed his confidence in the noble character of the Emperor Alexander; he might have fled to the King of Prussia, who, without doubt, when he beheld him as a suppliant before him, would have recalled their former alliance.[2] Is England to be

[1] When O'Meara left the island, the Emperor was to all appearance, in very fair health. Certainly, O'Meara himself did not believe that there was any cause for anxiety.

[2] Such reasoning, of course, was absurd. If Napoleon had attempted either of these courses, he would have fallen into the hands of Blücher, and shared the fate of Murat.

allowed to punish him for the confidence he has shown in her?

The Emperor Napoleon is no more to be feared. He is infirm. If he were in full health and in possession of the resources which Providence had formerly placed in his hands, civil war is abhorrent to him. Sire, I am a mother, and my son's life is dearer to me than my own. Forgive me that, in my grief, I venture to address this letter to your Imperial and Royal Majesties.

Do not allow a mother to appeal to you in vain against the continued cruelty exercised towards her son.

In the name of Him Who is mercy itself and of Whom your Imperial Majesties are the image, interest yourself in his liberty. I entreat this of God; I entreat it of you, who are His lieutenants on earth.

Reasons of State have their limits, and posterity, which forgets nothing, admires above everything the generosity of conquerors.

I am with respect, Sire, etc.,

Madame Mère.

This letter remained unanswered. The Allied Sovereigns were too much indebted to British steel and British gold to presume to interfere between England and her captive.

Madame's effort to interest the Allies in her son's favour exposed her to suspicion, and, in 1820, she was accused of maintaining agents in Corsica and of financing a conspiracy to excite disturbances in France. The French Government, through its Ambassador, Blacas, addressed

a serious complaint to Pius VII, who was compelled, much against his will, to inquire into the matter.[1] He accordingly sent his Secretary of State to acquaint her with the rumours which were in circulation and to beg her to authorise him to deny them. "Monseigneur," replied the high-spirited old lady, "I do not possess the millions with which they credit me, but let M. de Blacas tell his master, Louis XVIII, that, if I did, I should not employ them to foment troubles in Corsica or to gain adherents for my son in France, since he already has enough. I should use them to fit out a fleet to liberate him from St. Helena, where the most infamous perfidy is holding him captive."

Saying which, she made his Eminence a profound reverence and left the room.

From the Pope downwards, *Madame* was regarded by every one in Rome with the most profound sympathy and respect; but, though her salon was always open to the members of her family and the comparatively few persons whom she admitted to her intimacy, she never went into society. "My life," she says, "ended with the fall of the Emperor. From that moment, I renounced everything and for ever. I ceased to go into any kind of society; I ceased to visit the theatre, which had been my one distraction

[1] The Holy Father not only entertained a very sincere regard for *Madame*, but he appears to have been under financial obligations to her at this time, she having, according to Baron Larrey, lent him 500,000 francs.

in times of trouble. My children and my nephews frequently urged me to go to the play, but I always refused, regarding the invitation as an insult."[1]

Although Napoleon had declined *Madame's* offer of financial assistance, his brothers and sisters, who had learned little in the school of adversity, and who found it difficult to renounce the luxurious and extravagant habits that they had acquired during their years of prosperity, were not so scrupulous, and pestered her with demands for money, Jérôme and Louis being the worst offenders. She gave to them generously, but, at the same time, insisted strongly on the need for retrenchment and on the folly of endeavouring to maintain a semi-regal state on insufficient means. "A man must live in accordance with his position," she wrote to Louis. "If he has ceased to be a king, it is ridiculous to pose as one. Rings adorn fingers, but they fall off, and the fingers remain."

Yet, singularly enough, she herself clung tenaciously to one relic of her former grandeur: she firmly refused to discontinue the use of the Imperial Arms on her carriages. "Why should I do so?" she inquired. "Europe bowed to the dust before my son's Arms for ten years, and her sovereigns have not forgotten it."

This refusal led to a singular incident. One day, as she was driving on the Corso, the crowd

[1] *Souvenirs dictés à Rome.*

of carriages compelled her coachman to walk his horses. At that moment, two Austrian officers who happened to be riding by, recognised the Imperial Arms on the panels and, prompted by curiosity, drew rein and peered into the carriage. Such impertinence on the part of any ordinary person *Madame* would have ignored, but the sight of the Austrian uniforms roused her indignation. "What, gentlemen, is your pleasure?" she exclaimed, letting down the window. "If it is to see the mother of the Emperor Napoleon, here she is!" At which, the officers, much abashed, saluted respectfully and rode off.

Madame detested the Austrians almost as bitterly as she did the English. She never could forgive François II for joining the Coalition in 1813, while the hatred she had once borne Josephine was as nothing to that which she now entertained towards the mistress of Neipperg. When, in 1819, the Emperor of Austria visited Rome, Marie Louise proposed to accompany him; but, in order to avoid any unpleasantness, it was considered advisable for the Austrian Ambassador to inquire first whether her mother-in-law would receive her. The diplomatist accordingly waited upon *Madame* at the Palazzo Ranucci, where she was then living, to ascertain her views, when the lady expressed her opinion in regard to her daughter-in-law in so very outspoken a manner that his Excellency begged the ex-Empress to forego her visit.

The captive of St. Helena often spoke to those about him of his mother, and always in terms of the deepest respect and affection. When, at the end of the year 1820, Antommarchi arrived, he overwhelmed the new-comer with questions concerning her.

"She has loved me all her life," said he. "She is the best of women, the most excellent of mothers, with a courage and determination above her sex."

Madame, on her side, did not relax her efforts to obtain the removal of her son from the "barren rock," but nothing—not even his restoration to liberty—could benefit the Emperor now. At the beginning of June, 1821, she learned from the Abbé Buonavita, who had left St. Helena in the middle of March, of Napoleon's alarming condition, and on July 22 came the news of his death, which had occurred on the evening of May 5.

Happily, Buonavita had prepared her for the worst, and, though for several days she shut herself up with her grief and refused to see even her brother or her children, her health does not seem to have been affected. "There has been no necessity for her to take to her bed," writes Fesch to Jérôme, on August 1, "and she has shown no feverish symptoms. With the exception of profound melancholy, loss of appetite, and an increasing weakness, she is well." And, ten days later, *Madame* herself writes to Pauline

that "her health is passable, in comparison with what she had suffered and was suffering."[1]

In the same letter, *Madame* informs her daughter that she is about to address a request to the British Government for permission to have the body of the Emperor removed to Europe. But this request was refused, nor was it until 1840 that Napoleon's desire "to be buried on the banks of the Seine, among the French people whom I loved so well," was fulfilled.

In the autumn, Antommarchi, who had left St. Helena three weeks after his illustrious patient's death, arrived in Rome, to furnish the family, in conformity with the wishes of the Emperor, with the particulars of his last illness. He first visited Parma, where he sought an audience of Marie Louise, which, however, was not accorded, for reasons not difficult to understand. He met with a similar refusal from Louis, at Florence, the delicate nerves of the Comte de Saint-Leu not being presumably equal to the shock of hearing details of his brother's death.

At Rome, however, the worthy doctor's reception was very different; he was received with much kindness by Fesch and Pauline, and had several interviews with *Madame*. "The grief of *Madame Mère*," he writes, "was still very great, and I was obliged to be very careful in what I said, and to spare her feelings—in a word,

[1] Published by Baron Larrey.

to give her only an outline of what I had witnessed. On my second visit, she was calmer and more resigned; and I gave her some details, which were, however, continually interrupted by her sobs. I stopped, whereupon the unhappy mother dried her tears and began to question me anew. It was a struggle between courage and grief; never was such heartrending emotion seen. I saw her the third time, when she overwhelmed me with proofs of her goodwill and satisfaction, and presented me with a diamond, which I shall never part with, since it is a present from the Emperor's mother!"[1]

Élisa, whom the Emperor of Austria had authorised to bear the title of Contessa di Compignano, lived tranquilly at Bologna until the early spring of 1815. She appears to have been kept under very strict surveillance, for the voluminous police reports of that period preserved in the Bologna Archives show that every letter addressed to her was opened at the Post Office, and every visit she received carefully noted. But the police failed to discover anything to compromise her, although there can be little doubt that she had established means of communication with the French party in her former principality, and that the spirit of hostility to the new *régime* which manifested itself in Lucca and other towns was fomented by her agents.

[1] Antommarchi, *Mémoires.*

With the object of allaying any suspicion which the Government might entertain, she pretended to be entirely occupied with the pleasures of society, and was assiduous in her attendance at balls, fêtes, and other social functions; and we even hear of her organising an "archæological masquerade," the subject of which was "The Marriage of the Samnites."[1] Nevertheless, this diplomatic conduct did not prevent the Austrian Government, when the news arrived of the Emperor's return to France,[2] from deciding that it was inadvisable to permit the Contessa di Compignano to remain in Italy, and, in March, she left Bologna, escorted by a squadron of hussars, who did not leave her until she arrived on Austrian soil.

After spending some months at Brünn, in Moravia, under more or less close surveillance, she was allowed to proceed to Trieste. Here she took a fancy to a house belonging to a Greek named Psara, a general in the Russian army. This residence she bought, together with a country-house, the Villa Vicentina, some

[1] M. Rodocanachi, *Élisa Napoléon en Italie.*

[2] M. Rodocanachi states that Élisa was so well informed of the events which were preparing that, on the evening of February 26, 1815, at the precise hour when the Emperor embarked for France, she looked at her watch and exclaimed: "*Le coup est fait!*" But, although she may have been aware of the Emperor's intentions, she could not possibly have known the date, still less the hour, for his departure, unless she were gifted with supernatural powers, since Napoleon did not decide to leave Elba on the 26th until the 24th, when he learned that the *Partridge* would be at Leghorn on the former date.

miles from the city, and determined to spend the rest of her days in Istria. Having had the good sense to renounce all her political ambitions, she lived a very contented life, surrounded by a little Court of artists, musicians, and French exiles, while she also had the consolation of the society of her sister Caroline, who came occasionally from Frohsdorf to visit her. In 1819, the Austrian Government restored to her her Italian property, which had been sequestrated, and, having disposed of it, she purchased with the proceeds a fine estate in Istria. She did not, however, live long to enjoy this increase of fortune, as she had been for some time past in indifferent health, and, on August 7th of the following year, she died at the Villa Vicentina, in her forty-fourth year.

Of Élisa's two surviving children, the boy born in 1814, who received the name of Frédéric, died, in Rome, in 1834, from injuries received by a fall from his horse. The daughter, the Princesse Napoléone, married, in 1825, an Italian nobleman, the Conte Camerata, from whom, however, she separated, five years later. She seems to have been of a decidedly enterprising temperament, for, in 1830, she was concerned in an abortive plot to carry off the young Duke of Reichstadt from Schönbrunn, bring him to Paris, and proclaim him Emperor. When, in 1851, Louis Napoleon ascended the throne, she came to Paris and benefited largely by the regeneration

of the family fortunes, receiving in eighteen years, according to one writer, over six million francs in pensions and *gratifications*. After 1853, when her only son committed suicide under somewhat mysterious circumstances, Paris society saw little of her, as she retired to her estate of Kour-el-Ouet in Brittany, where she passed the rest of her life. She was greatly interested in agricultural experiments, and spent large sums in draining the marshes of the Île d'Ouessant. She died in 1869, leaving her property to the Prince Imperial.

As for "*ce bon et rebon* Baciocchi," after his wife's death, he sold her villa at Trieste and obtained permission to settle at Bologna, where he installed himself in the Palazzo Ranuzzi. He was careful to keep on good terms with the Austrian Government, which not only made him an allowance, but persuaded the Pope to bestow upon him the title of Roman Prince, which doubtless occasioned him much gratification. He terminated his harmless, if somewhat futile existence, in 1841.

In the Church of San Petronio, in Bologna, Félix purchased a chapel, in which he caused monuments to be erected to all the members of his family. "On one side of the chapel, around a medallion on which are represented the three children of Élisa and Félix who died in infancy, two women are weeping, and an inscription felicitates these children on not having known the reverses which the family experienced.

On the other side, a second medallion represents Élisa, and the following inscription may be read below:

"'Here is deposited the heart of the Princess Élisa Bacciochi, who was Grand-Duchess of Tuscany, Princess of Lucca and Piombino, during the reign of the Emperor Napoleon, her brother.'

"At the bottom, a group composed of a man and a woman holding each other's hands is surmounted by the genius of conjugal love, which certainly did not watch over them until they were dead."[1]

On arriving in Rome, in October 1815, Pauline did not take up her quarters at the Palazzo Borghese. The famous palace had been let to the ex-King of Spain, Charles IV, and, even had it been unoccupied, it is improbable that she would have resided there, as she was still on very bad terms with her husband, and, consequently, indisposed to accept any favour at his hands. She installed herself in the Palazzo Sciarra, a commodious Renaissance building, which had the advantage of being situated in one of the most fashionable quarters of the city. A little later, she purchased a small but pretty country-house outside the Porta Pia, which she named the Villa Paolina, and here she appears to have spent most of the summer.

Though she had lost her youth, her health,

[1] M. Rodocanachi, *Élisa Napoléon en Italie.*

and the greater part of her fortune, Pauline was much more popular in Rome than she had been during her former residence there. Society—or at least the more devout section of it—was at first inclined to look askance at a lady who was separated from her husband, and whose amorous adventures had made her the talk of Europe. But the good-hearted Pius VII, to whom the princess had been very attentive during his captivity in France, had conceived a warm regard for her and did not hesitate to show it, and where his Holiness led, Society felt compelled to follow. Nor had it any reason for regret, since the Pauline of 1815 was a very different person from the beautiful madcap of 1804, who had shocked the grave cardinals and stately matrons by her sublime disregard for those time-honoured conventions which were to them almost as sacred as the Decalogue—a Pauline more subdued, less capricious, more amiable, less futile; who received even her most tiresome visitors with a smile, instead of with the ill-concealed ennui of former times, listened with a pretty affectation of interest to discussions even on the most abstruse subjects, and showed a most laudable desire to make herself agreeable to every one.

But what aroused the admiration of all who knew her, was her intense devotion to the Emperor. With the exception of *Madame Mère*, none of the family had entertained for Napoleon

an affection so sincere and so disinterested as her own. But now that he was fallen, exiled, abandoned and betrayed by his wife, deprived of his son, he was nearer her heart than ever, seldom, indeed, out of her thoughts. If her health had permitted her to make the long voyage to St. Helena, and she could have secured the consent of the British Government, there can be no doubt that she would have hastened to join him. But, as that was not possible, she did everything in her power to lighten the burden of his lot, and, in April 1817, Blacas, the French Ambassador in Rome, reported that the Princess Borghese was endeavouring to sell all her valuables, in order to transmit the proceeds to her brother. However, as we have seen, the Emperor declined to accept such sacrifices from his relatives.

When, in the early summer of 1821, the Abbé Buonavita arrived from St. Helena, with the news of the alarming condition of Napoleon, Pauline hastened to address the following letter to Lord Liverpool:

Rome
June 11, 1815

The Abbé Buonavita, who has arrived from the Island of St. Helena, which he left on March 17 last, has brought us the most alarming news of my brother's health. I send you enclosed a copy of his letters, which will give you particulars of his sufferings. The malady by which he is attacked is mortal at St. Helena. In the name of all the family, I demand that he be removed

to a different climate. If this request were refused, it would be for him a sentence of death.

It was, however, too late; Napoleon had passed away five weeks before.

The Emperor's death was a great shock to Pauline. From that time, her health, always bad, grew steadily worse. Of her beauty—that beauty which had made havoc of so many hearts—which so late as 1819 had been still so remarkable, that one who saw her then declared that "the most perfect models could not be compared with her,"[1] no trace now remained, save her lovely eyes, which seemed to shine with an added lustre; nothing interested her; she seemed indifferent to all around her, and "she who had excited so much love, no longer excited anything but pity."

In the autumn of 1823, through the good offices of the new pontiff, Leo XII, a reconciliation was effected between her and her husband, and she removed to Borghese's palace in Florence. The prince, at bottom, a kind-hearted and chivalrous man, who might have said concerning Pauline as did the Comtesse de Guiche on learning of the death of her husband: "I should have loved her passionately, if she had loved me at all," lavished upon the sick woman every possible attention, but she was now marked for death, and on June 9, 1825, she passed quietly away within four months

[1] *Itinéraire et Souvenirs d'une voyage en Italie.* The writer adds: "Artists did not find her equal for grace of form and perfection of proportion save in the Venus de' Medici.

of completing her forty-fifth year. Jérôme was the only member of the Bonaparte family who was with her at the last.

Her body was transferred to Rome and buried in the chapel of the Borghese family in the Church of Santa-Maria-Maggiore. The bulk of her fortune, which amounted to two million francs, was bequeathed to her brothers Louis and Joseph.

Pauline had many grave faults; we have dwelt upon them at sufficient length elsewhere. But she possessed, in a high degree, one virtue—that which Napoleon esteemed far above all others—loyalty.

And that atones for much.

CHAPTER XXXVI

Caroline in Austria—Her financial embarrassments—Her claims on the French Government—Restrictions imposed on her by the Allied Powers—She complains of the conduct of Metternich—She settles at Trieste, where she is visited by Madame Récamier, and by the Countess Potocka-Wonsowicz—Impressions of the latter—Caroline's anecdotes of Napoleon—Relations with General Macdonald—She obtains permission to reside in Florence—Her popularity in Society—Her visit to Paris in 1838—Her death—Last years of *Madame Mère*—Her letter to Marie Louise on learning of the death of the Duke of Reichstadt—She becomes crippled and blind—Her joy on learning that the statue of Napoleon is to be replaced on the Vendôme Column—She declines the offer to except her from the decree banishing the Bonapartes from France—Her death—Her remains removed to Ajaccio.

ON arriving at Trieste, the Contessa di Lipona—as Caroline now called herself—was not permitted to remain in that city, it being apparently considered too near Italy, but was required to reside in the interior of the Empire, and settled at Hainburg, about twenty-five miles south of Vienna. Here, however, her stay was but brief, as, in the autumn, she removed to the Castle of Frohsdorf, which, thirty years later, became the property of the Duchesse d'Angoulême, and subsequently of the Comte de Chambord. It was at Frohsdorf, one day towards the end of October, that she learned, from

a Viennese journal, of the tragic fate of her husband, of whose foolhardy enterprise she had, of course, been in complete ignorance. She was naturally much shocked, but, since it is doubtful if she had had any affection for Murat after the first years of their married life, her grief was probably of short duration. Besides, she was still young, and General Macdonald, formerly Minister for War at Naples, who had accompanied her into exile, was a fine figure of a man and her very devoted servant.

Her financial position, however, claimed the most of her attention, and she found herself in very straitened circumstances for a lady who had been in the habit of paying from ten to fifteen thousand francs for her gowns, and from four hundred to five hundred francs for her hats. Ferdinand had confiscated all her property in Italy, including the valuable furniture, paintings and *objets d'art* with which Joseph Bonaparte, during his reign, had embellished the palace,[1] and for which the Murats, on taking possession, had reimbursed him to the extent of 1,500,000 francs; while Napoleon's return from Elba had, of course, freed Louis XVIII from the obligation of paying the Bonaparte family the pensions stipulated for in 1814, though it is an open question whether, even if that event had not occurred, the Allies

[1] Ferdinand IV, on quitting Naples, in 1806, had stripped the palace bare, being determined to leave as little as possible of his property in the hands of the French.

would ever have succeeded in persuading him to disgorge.

Ferdinand naturally paid no attention to the Contessa di Lipona's claim for an indemnity, but Caroline clung tenaciously to the hope that the French Government might be induced to pay her the annual compensation guaranteed the Murats in the Bayonne Decree of 1808 in return for the surrender of Neuilly and their other estates in France to the Crown.[1] Just or not from a strictly legal point of view, her demands remained without effect until 1838—the year preceding her death—when the Government of Louis Philippe accorded her an annual payment of 100,000 francs, "in consideration of her misfortunes and because she was the sister of the Emperor Napoleon."

Nor were financial embarrassments her only vexations, for the Powers seem to have shared the high opinion of her abilities which Talleyrand had once expressed, and to have regarded her as the most dangerous of all the exiled family. Her request to be allowed to join her relatives in Rome was refused, and she was informed that it had been decided that Italy, the Low Countries, and Switzerland were forbidden ground, and that she must either resign herself to living in Germany or apply for passports to America. Even in Germany, she was kept under surveillance, and when she travelled, was not per-

[1] See p. 144, *supra*.

mitted to remain in one place for more than a certain length of time.

In a letter to one of her friends, which is preserved in the Vienna Archives, she complains bitterly of the conduct of her old admirer Metternich: "He is influenced by fear; he is afraid that he will be suspected of being prejudiced in my favour; and this fear causes him to subscribe to the most vexatious decrees. During the nine years I spent at Frohsdorf, I followed all his counsels. What is the result? Incessant persecutions."[1]

When Caroline wrote this letter, she had left Frohsdorf, and was living in the environs of Trieste, in a villa called Campo Mars, which she had purchased from a merchant of that city. Here, in 1825, she received a visit from her old friend Madame Récamier, who was accompanied by her humble worshipper Simon Ballanche.[2] The two ladies had so much to say to each other at their first interview that the "amiable Juliette," as her royal friend called her, quite forgot the philosopher, who remained patiently in a corridor where she had left him until his divinity reappeared, which was not for several hours.

Madame Récamier found the ex-Queen still very handsome, though she had developed a

[1] D. Melegari, *Une reine en exil*, in *le Correspondant*, December 1898.

[2] On Ballanche and his touching devotion to Madame Récamier, see the author's *Madame Récamier and Her Friends* (Harpers, 1901).

tendency to *embonpoint*, and "as she was not tall, her figure had not gained in elegance." Her complexion was also somewhat faded. However, she was amiability itself, for, when really desirous of pleasing, Caroline could be charming; and Madame Récamier, who had highly-placed admirers in Paris, might prove a very useful friend.

General Macdonald was presented to the fair visitor, who observed that her hostess showed towards him "*un sentiment affectueux mêlé à une nuance de domination*," which seemed to indicate that, if she were really married to him, as many persons averred, she did not intend him to forget that she was also his Queen.

Caroline seems to have been in a very despondent mood at this time, and complained to Madame Récamier of her straitened means, the restrictions to which she was subjected, and her solitude, for both her sons had left her to seek their fortunes in the United States, while her elder daughter had married, and the younger was about to follow her sister's example. Madame Récamier sought to console her, and promised to persuade her powerful friends, Chateaubriand and Mathieu de Montmorency, to endeavour to obtain for her the sums guaranteed by the Bayonne Decree: but the French Government, as we have seen, declined to recognise her claim.[1]

[1] Madame Lenormant, *Souvenirs et Correspondance de Madame Récamier*.

When, in the following year, the Countess Potocka-Wonsowicz visited Caroline, on her way to make that tour of Italy of which she has left us so interesting an account,[1] the latter appears to have been much more resigned to her position. She was then engaged in superintending various improvements in her villa and the extensive gardens attached to it, "which seemed to have made her forget that she had once possessed the most beautiful of realms," and had succeeded in converting it into a most delightful residence.

The countess, who had met Caroline in Paris at the time of the marriage of Napoleon and Marie Louise, was received most graciously and writes of her hostess in terms of positive enthusiasm:

"I found her again with a countenance as attractive as in former days, and felt that she wished to make every one who approached her love her. The throne had disappeared, but the charm remained, and formed a piquant contrast to a very uncommon strength of mind, a serious disposition, a kindness, and an evenness of temper which such great misfortunes had been powerless to sour or even to trouble."

During the six weeks that Madame Potocka spent at Trieste, she visited the Villa Campo Mars every day, and in the evenings, which she and the ex-Queen generally spent on a little

[1] Countess Potocka-Wonsowicz, *Voyage d'Italie, publié par Casimir Stryienski* (Paris, 1899).

terrace overlooking the sea, Caroline would often speak "of her life and of the extraordinary man to whom she was so nearly related." "I regret," continues the countess, "that I did not note down every day all that she recounted; I particularly recollect the anecdotes concerning the infancy and life of Napoleon. They had a stamp of truth and sincerity about them which enchanted me:

"From the time that he was grown up, he governed the house, although he was not the eldest; all obeyed him, all consulted him; he directed the elder and protected the younger. They loved him, because he was kind, but they respected him, because he was serious. Never did they see him indulge in the childishness natural to the young. Grief never extorted from him tears, nor the wish to possess, a prayer. . . . Later, the relations of Napoleon with his relatives became those of a noble and generous benefactor, but what was charming in this intercourse, was that Napoleon liked them to make him little presents in return; he seemed delighted when his sisters brought them to him on his fête-day.

"Queen Caroline was, for a long while, his favourite sister; he spoke to her quite freely, and often she ventured to tell him great and useful truths. It was only necessary for her to choose her time; then he was never annoyed. . . . When any observation was made to him, he listened patiently and attentively, but he would suffer no

contradiction; when he gave an order, it had to be obeyed without hesitation."

It is not a little singular that Caroline, whose conduct and that of her husband had, as all the world knew, materially contributed to precipitate the fall of the indulgent brother to whom she owed everything, should have taken pleasure in recounting these anecdotes. Certainly, there is no indication here, nor in the letters which she wrote in her later years, of the troubled conscience which we should naturally expect to find. The probability is that hers was one of those characters so colossally selfish, so entirely destitute of moral sense, that they regard the sacrifice of the noblest sentiments to their own personal interests as in the natural order of things, and are quite incapable of feeling remorse.

One of the largest rooms in the Villa Campo Mars was consecrated to souvenirs of the Imperial Family. Its principal ornament was a magnificent portrait of Murat on horseback, but every member of the family was represented, either in marble or on canvas. For some reason, Caroline never did the honours of this room, a duty which was performed by General Macdonald.

That gallant officer seems to have made a highly favourable impression on Madame Potocka. "Fate," she writes, "in depriving her [Caroline] of all the favours with which Fortune had overwhelmed her, had been powerless to rob her of the most precious of all. A faithful friend

remained to her. The qualities of this man, like his attachment, were superior; his countenance revealed the loftiness of his soul; one experienced an infinite charm in studying the character of a man, whose life was, so to speak, made up of devotion and refined sentiments. Such was General Macdonald, who was said "to be secretly married to the Queen."

The countess, however, discreetly declines to express a definite opinion concerning this rumour. "During the six weeks that I saw them daily," she continues, "I perceived nothing which could make me adopt or reject this idea; on the one side, the most sincere friendship, the most genuine esteem; on the other, the most unvarying respect and the most entire abnegation. Such were the ties existing between them. It is probable that love had passed that way; and what remained did honour to both."

In the autumn of 1831, when the terrible epidemic of cholera which ravaged Germany that year was approaching Trieste, Caroline was allowed by the Austrian Government to pass the winter in Florence, and, shortly afterwards, she received permission to reside there permanently. She was made very welcome by Florentine society, while foreign visitors seem to have regarded her as one of the sights of the Tuscan capital, and, at the end of 1833, we find her writing to her nephew Louis Bonaparte, the future Napoleon III: "Although I am very in-

conveniently lodged until I am able to reside in the palace which I am having put in order, all Florence visits me, and foreigners come in crowds."[1]

Save for a visit to Paris, in the summer of 1838, when her still considerable powers of fascination probably contributed not a little to secure her the pension which the Chambers soon afterwards voted her, Caroline scarcely quitted Florence during the remainder of her life. She died there on May 18, 1839, in her sixtieth year, so that she did not profit much by the tardy liberality of the French Government. She had lost the faithful Macdonald two years earlier.

Of her four children, the two girls, Lœtitia and Louise, both married Italian noblemen, the former, the Conte Pepoli, and the latter, the Conte Rasponi; but their lives appear to have been very uneventful. Both sons, as we have mentioned elsewhere, went early in life to seek their fortunes in the United States. The elder, Napoléon Achille, who emigrated in 1821, purchased an estate near Tallahassee, Florida, and, five years later, married a grand-niece of Washington, Miss Catharina Dudley, to whom he had been introduced by Lafayette, when he revisited the scene of his former exploits in 1825. Although, as a youth, Achille Murat seems to have caused his mother and his tutors a good deal of anxiety and trouble, he lived a quiet and

[1] Published by D. Melegari, *Une Reine en exil, in le Correspondant*, December, 1898.

studious life, dividing his time between farming and literature. In the latter pursuit, he acquired a considerable reputation as a publicist, by several commendable works on America and her institutions, perhaps the best of which is his *Exposition de principes du gouvernement républicain tel qu'il a été perfectionné en Amérique*, which first appeared in 1833. His interest in politics, however, was of a purely academic nature, as he declined all offers of a political career. He died in 1847.

His younger brother, Napoléon Lucien Charles, came to the United States in 1825, and, after spending a short time in Boston, joined his uncle Joseph, the ex-King of Spain, who was then living in Philadelphia, under the title of the Comte de Survilliers. Like Achille, Lucien married an American lady, a Miss Fraser, of Bordentown, New Jersey, who, when, in later years, she and her husband experienced reverses of fortune, established a fashionable seminary for girls in her native town, which appears to have been a very successful undertaking. Lucien was of a far more ambitious temperament than his brother, and after the Revolution of 1848 he returned to France, and was elected deputy to the Constituent Assembly for the Department of the Lot, in which the old home of his family was situated. In the same year, he was sent as Minister Plenipotentiary to Turin. On Louis Napoleon becoming Emperor, he was given a seat in the Senate and recognised as a Prince of the Imperial Family.

The Emperor also accorded him a pension of 150,000 francs, and paid his debts, which are said to have amounted to two million francs. When King Bomba was driven out of Naples by his exasperated subjects, Lucien advanced some rather timid pretensions to his father's throne, but the time had not yet come for delivering Italy from the Bourbon and Austrian yoke, and the French Government not only declined to support his claims, but officially disavowed them. After the Revolution of September, 1870, he retired from public life, and died on April 10, 1878.

Lucien Murat left five children, two of whom were well-known figures in Parisian society during the Second Empire: the Princess Anna, who married the Duc de Mouchy, and Prince Achille, a brilliant cavalry officer, who married the Princess Dadiana of Mingrelia.

Let us conclude, as we began, with the mother of the Bonapartes.

Madame survived the son whom she so deeply mourned more than fifteen years. Her life was a sad one, for death, not content with depriving her of Élisa and the Emperor, was very busy among the Bonapartes and their relatives. Pauline died in 1825; the young Duke of Reichstadt in 1832; Napoleon Louis, the future Napoleon III's elder brother, in 1832;[1] and Camillo Borghese in the

[1] In her later years, *Madame* appears to have become greatly attached to Hortense's children, and to have even tolerated Hortense herself.

same year; Frédéric Baciocchi, Élisa's son, in 1834, and her best-loved daughter-in-law, Catherine of Westphalia, in 1835. She also lost her faithful Saveria, who died about the same time as Pauline.

The death of the Duke de Reichstadt was a terrible blow to *Madame*, for, since his father's death, he had been the centre of all her hopes, and she had bequeathed to him the bulk of her fortune. "All that I possess came to me from the Emperor," she observed, "and it is but just that I should return it to his child."

Marie Louise herself announced the sad event to her mother-in-law, in a letter from Schönbrunn, written the day after the young duke's death, and begged her to "accept, on this sorrowful occasion, the assurance of the kindly feeling entertained for her by her affectionate daughter." In reply, *Madame* dictated to Fesch the following letter:

Rome

August 6, 1832

Madame,—Notwithstanding the political shortsightedness which has constantly deprived me of all news of the dear child whose death you have been so considerate to announce to me, I have never ceased to entertain towards him the devotion of a mother. In him, I still found an object of some consolation, but to my great age and to my incessant and painful infirmities God has seen fit to add this blow as a fresh proof of His mercy, since I firmly believe that He will amply

MARIA LETIZIA BONAPARTE, "MADAME MERE"

AFTER THE DRAWING MADE IN 1835 BY THE PRINCESSE CHARLOTTE BONAPARTE

atone to him, in His glory, for the glory of this world.

Accept my thanks, Madame, for having put yourself to this trouble, in such sorrowful circumstances, to alleviate the bitterness of my grief. Be sure that it will remain with me all my life.

My condition precludes me from even signing this letter; and I must therefore crave your permission to delegate the task to my brother.

For a woman of her advanced age, *Madame's* physical activity was quite remarkable. She went almost every day on foot to hear Mass at Santa Maria in Portico or at San Lorenzo in Lucina, and frequently walked in the grounds of the Villa Borghese, which, she declared, reminded her of France. However, during one of her promenades in the Villa, towards the end of April 1830, she stumbled, fell, and fractured her hip. Happily, her carriage was near at hand, and she was driven rapidly home, but the pain and the shock were so great that the worst was feared. All the members of the family were summoned, and Fesch even contemplated administering the last Sacraments. She recovered, however, but from that day she was no longer able to walk and had to content herself with carriage exercise. Soon, too, an infinitely worse affliction came upon her; her sight, which had, for some time past, been causing great anxiety, failed altogether, and she became totally blind.

Nevertheless, the year 1830 brought to the afflicted woman one great happiness. After the July Revolution, the new Government decided to replace the statue of Napoleon on the Vendôme Column. When the news was brought to *Madame*, tears of joy flowed from her sightless eyes, as she repeated to herself: "The statue of the Emperor on the Column! The statue of the Emperor!" Her delight, however, was tinged with sorrow at the thought that she would never see it, nor even the models which had been sent to Rome. "Alas! my poor eyes!" she exclaimed. "How I have regretted them! I sometimes fear that they are deceiving a poor exiled mother, infirm and blind. Age and misfortune make us distrustful."[1] And she added: "If I had been in Paris, as in former days, God would have given me strength to cling to the top of the Column, to assure myself of the truth. . . ."

After the loss of her sight, *Madame* seldom left the Palazzo Bonaparte, except for an occasional drive. Her chief amusement consisted in having newspapers and books read to her, Jérôme, whose voice bore a singular resemblance to that of Napoleon, being her favourite reader. She was particularly fond of listening to works dealing with the Emperor's campaigns, and to the memoirs of his contemporaries, though, it is to be presumed, her relatives considered it ad-

[1] Baron Larrey, *Madame Mère*.

visable to skip passages in which Napoleon was subjected to adverse criticism.

Her infirmities and the succession of deaths in the Bonaparte family, of which we have already spoken, darkened her closing years, but she was not without compensation. She was beloved by her children and grandchildren; she enjoyed the esteem of all who were privileged to know her and of numbers who knew her only by name; and the almost sublime resignation which she showed under the burden of her sorrows proves that the merely formal observance of her religious duties which seems to have contented her in early and middle life, must have long since given place to a deep and abiding faith.[1]

In the spring of 1834, there was a movement in Paris to repeal the sentence of banishment passed upon the Bonapartes in favour of their aged mother, and to invite her to end her days in France. There can be little doubt that the proposal would have passed the Chambers, but when one of its supporters approached *Madame* upon the subject, she at once replied that "she would never cease to share the lot of her children, which was the one comfort remaining to her."

Even if *Madame* had viewed the matter in a different light, it could have made no difference, since she was now far too infirm to leave Rome. The death of Catherine of Westphalia, to whom

[1] Pius VII described her as "a God-fearing woman, who deserved to be honoured by every prince in Christendom."

she was deeply attached, hastened the end, which, in any circumstances, could not have been long delayed; and on February 2, 1836, she died, in the presence of Fesch, Jérôme, Lucien and his wife, and her faithful attendants Colonna and Rosa Mellini. Supposing her to have been born in August, 1750, she had reached the great age of eighty-five. On the night of February 4–5, the body was removed to Carneto, near Civita Vecchia, and interred in the Church of the Dames de la Passion.

Fesch, who followed his sister to the grave a little more than two years later (May 13, 1839), bequeathed 200,000 francs for the erection of a church at Ajaccio, in which he desired that he should be buried and his sister's remains as well. His principal legatee, Joseph Bonaparte, however, failed to carry out these instructions, and it was left for Napoleon III to fulfil the cardinal's wishes. In 1851, he caused both bodies to be removed to Ajaccio, and deposited in a temporary grave, pending the erection of a church, which was finally completed in 1857. There *Madame Mère* rests, and over the entrance to the vault in which she lies is a marble slab bearing the following inscription in gold lettering:

MARIA LETIZIA RAMOLINO BONAPARTE.
MATER REGUM.

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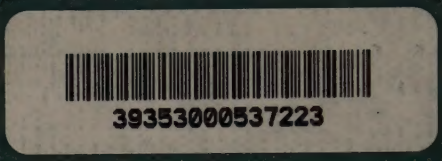
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